

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3437

By: Flores
Border & International Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Hidalgo County metropolitan area has experienced tremendous growth in recent decades but has not received adequate funding to update its transportation system. The financially constrained Metropolitan Transportation Plan includes 3,082 total roadway miles for the entire Hidalgo County region, and the Texas Metropolitan Mobility Plan (TMMP) has identified an additional need of \$1.4 billion to address all of the county's mobility needs. The shortfall of funds has resulted in a loss of productivity, a decrease in air quality, an increase in the costs of goods and services, and an overall diminishment in area residents' quality of life.

The goals adopted as part of the TMMP represent the region's commitment to a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuous transportation planning process that provides for a balanced transportation system by recognizing the evolving transportation needs of the region. Yet, the Texas Transportation Commission has indicated that it is time to change the way Texas plans, funds, and delivers transportation systems in metropolitan areas.

C.S.H.B. 3437 creates and authorizes the imposition of an additional fee, not to exceed \$10, for each vehicle registration in certain counties to fund long-term transportation projects in those counties.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the opinion of the committee that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Department of Transportation in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3437 amends the Transportation Code by establishing an optional county fee in certain counties for transportation projects. The bill authorizes the commissioners court of certain counties to impose by order an additional fee not to exceed \$10 for each vehicle registration in the county. The bill provides for the registration of a vehicle without payment of the additional fee. The bill sets forth provisions authorizing the imposition and removal of the fee. The bill requires the county assessor-collector of a county imposing a fee authorized by this Act to collect the additional fee and sets forth provisions for the collection of the additional fee. The bill requires the county to send the fee revenue to the regional mobility authority of the county to fund long-term transportation projects in the county. The bill requires the department to collect the additional fee imposed under the provisions of this Act, and requires the department to send all fees collected under the provisions of this Act to the regional mobility authority of the county to fund long-term transportation projects in the county.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The substitute differs from the original in that it is a document prepared by the Texas Legislative Council. The substitute also differs by providing that the fee be for long-term transportation projects, rather than for addressing mobility needs, and that it cannot exceed \$10, rather than be \$10. The substitute deletes language that provided that the additional fee be used to address the

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mobility needs of the county within the metropolitan area boundaries of any metropolitan planning organizations in the county.

The substitute adds language requiring the county to send the fee revenue to the regional mobility authority of the county to fund long-term transportation projects in the county. The substitute also added language requiring the department to collect the additional fee imposed under the provisions of this Act. The substitute also requires the department to send all fees collected under the provisions of this Act to the regional mobility authority of the county to fund long-term transportation projects in the county.

The substitute also modifies the effective date by providing for immediate effect if the Act receives the necessary vote. Otherwise, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.