

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 15  
By: Leibowitz  
Transportation  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

A metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is an agency created under federal law to provide local input for urban transportation planning and allocating federal transportation funds in cities with a population greater than 50,000. There are twenty-five MPOs in Texas. The largest is the Dallas-Fort Worth MPO and the smallest is the Sherman-Denison MPO. Each MPO receives federal funding for transportation planning. Many receive state and local funds as well in order to carry out their planning activities.

Transportation planning decisions are made by the policy board of an MPO. This can be as benign as the planning of bike routes in an urban area or as controversial as the construction of toll roads. The policy board of an MPO can be made up of a mix of elected and non-elected officials. Currently, unelected officials, some not even permanent residents of the urban area affected by the MPO they sit on, cast votes on approving the construction of toll roads. Unelected officials who are not accountable to voters should not be allowed to essentially levy a tax on the citizens of a community.

H.B. 15 allows only the elected officials on an MPO policy board to vote on toll road projects.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 15 amends the Transportation Code to prohibit a member of the policy board of a metropolitan planning organization from participating in a vote of the board to approve the construction of a new toll project or the conversion of a nontolled project to a toll project unless the member is an elected official.

H.B. 15 provides for the prohibition to take effect, either as an amendment to Chapter 371, Transportation Code, as added by Chapter 103 (H.B. 570), Acts of the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, or as an amendment to Chapter 372, Transportation Code, as redesignated by and contingent on passage of the Act of the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in existing codes.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2009.