

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 605
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Government Organization
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current law concerning a state employee's mileage reimbursement does not account for employee safety in route planning by employees traveling on state business. In considering only the most cost-effective route, state employees are prohibited from seeking reimbursement if they deviate from such a route, even if safety is a concern. Many times, state employees are forced to travel at night on poorly lit roads, which increases the chance of a vehicle collision with wildlife. Other times, state employees may need to deviate their travel in order to avoid extreme weather or other hostile conditions.

This bill allows for the state to take into account reasonable safety measures when calculating a state employee's mileage reimbursement and allows alternate routes to be taken in order to account for safety concerns.

H.B. 605 amends current law relating to mileage reimbursement for state employees.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Sections 660.043(a)-(c), Government Code, as follows:

(a) Prohibits the number of miles traveled that are eligible for reimbursement under this subchapter from exceeding the number of miles of the most cost-effective reasonably safe route between the origin of the state employee's travel and the final duty point of the state employee. Requires that the most cost-effective reasonably safe route between the origin and the final duty point, if a state employee conducts official state business at duty points between the origin of the state employee's travel and the final duty point, include the intermediate duty points.

(b) Authorizes a state agency, in determining the most cost-effective reasonably safe route for purposes of Subsection (a), to consider the route that provides the shortest distance, rather than route, between the origin of the state employee's travel and the final duty point; the route that provides the quickest drive time between the origin of the state employee's travel and the final duty point; and the route that provides the safest road conditions between the origin of the state employee's travel and the final duty point. Deletes existing text providing that for the purpose of Subsection (a) the shortest route between two points is presumed to be the most cost-effective route. Deletes existing text authorizing a longer route to be considered the most cost-effective route only if the voucher states that the longer route is more cost effective, the voucher provides a reasonable justification for that statement, and the statement and justification are made by the chief administrator of the state agency making the reimbursement or by the chief administrator's designee.

(c) Authorizes the number of miles traveled that are eligible for reimbursement under this subchapter to be determined by an employee's vehicle odometer reading or by a readily available electronic mapping service, rather than requiring the comptroller of public accounts to periodically issue and update a mileage guide that includes a chart

showing the number of miles for the shortest route between points. Deletes existing text authorizing the guide to include a chart showing the number of miles for longer routes between points. Deletes existing text requiring that farm-to-market and ranch-to-market roads be considered when determining the routings between points in this state. Deletes existing text authorizing the guide to be electronic or printed, or both.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 660.202(c), Government Code, to entitle a member of the legislature to be reimbursed for the member's use of personally owned or leased motor vehicles and the use of rented or public conveyances at the same rate as is provided in the General Appropriations Act for state employees, except that the member may only receive mileage reimbursement for the most cost-effective route between the origin of the member's travel and the final duty point.

SECTION 3. Repealer: Section 660.043(d) (relating to exceptions for reimbursable miles), Government Code.

SECTION 4. Provides that Section 660.043 (Determination Of Reimbursable Mileage), Government Code, as amended by this Act, applies only to the determination of reimbursable mileage for state employee travel occurring on or after January 1, 2010.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2009.