

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2899
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Transportation
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Government Code governs the use of contract travel services by state officials and employees and other eligible persons. Contract travel services may include credit cards used by the state, travel agencies, airlines, vehicles, Internet based reservation and ticketing, lodging, and other business related necessities associated with travelling for the state. The purpose of the state travel management program, administered by the comptroller of public accounts, is to encourage travelers to obtain the lowest overall cost of travel services.

State agency officials and employees in the executive branch are required to use the state's contract travel services whenever those services provide the lowest cost available. Other officials and employees represented by cities, counties, school districts, public junior colleges, other institutions of higher education, emergency communication districts, and the state judicial system may also use the state's contract travel services.

C.S.H.B. 2899 authorizes employees of metropolitan rapid transit authorities, regional transportation authorities, municipal mass transit authorities, county mass transportation authorities, rural and urban transit districts, coordinated county transportation authorities, and hospital districts who are engaged in official business of such an entity to use the comptroller's contracts for travel services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the comptroller of public accounts in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2899 amends the Government Code to authorize an officer or employee of a transportation or transit authority, department, district, or system, or hospital district established or created under appropriate provisions of state law who is engaged in official business of such an entity to participate in the comptroller of public accounts' contracts for travel services. The bill establishes that an officer or employee of a hospital district participates in the comptroller's contracts for the purpose of obtaining reduced airline fares and reduced travel agent fees. The bill authorizes the comptroller to charge a participating entity a fee not to exceed the costs incurred by the comptroller in providing these travel services. The bill requires the comptroller to periodically review fees and to adjust them as needed to ensure recovery of costs incurred in providing services to such entities.

C.S.H.B. 2899 requires the comptroller to deposit the fees collected from a hospital district to the credit of the hospital district airline fares account, which is defined as an account in the general revenue fund that may be appropriated only for the purposes of participating in travel services contracts. The bill requires the comptroller to adopt rules and to make or amend contracts as necessary to administer contracts for travel services to an officer or employee of a hospital district.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 2899 adds provisions not in the original relating to the participation of certain officers or employees of a hospital district in the comptroller of public accounts' contract for travel services for certain purposes and granting rulemaking authority to the comptroller to administer those provisions.