

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1570
By: Carona
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The key to future mobility in Texas is a well-rounded transportation portfolio that includes highways; transit, commercial and general aviation; and high-speed intercity passenger trains. Grassroots efforts exist to bring about high-speed rail, yet no state-level entity has stepped forward to move aggressively in coordinating these efforts or serving as a clearinghouse and focal point for funding, especially available federal funding.

S.B. 1570 amends current law relating to the facilitation, analysis, and implementation of high-speed passenger rail in this state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 91.001, Transportation Code, by adding Subdivision (3-a), to define "high-speed rail."

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 91, Transportation Code, by adding Subchapter G, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER G. HIGH-SPEED RAIL FACILITATION AND ANALYSIS

Sec. 91.121. TEXAS HIGH-SPEED RAIL CORPORATION. (a) Requires the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) to create a corporation under Subchapter B (Creation and Operation of Corporation), Chapter 431 (Texas Transportation Corporation Act) for the purposes of this subchapter.

(b) Provides that the corporation is not subject to the limitation provided by Section 431.072 (Limitation to Federal or State Highway System).

(c) Requires that the corporation have a board of seven members, of whom three are appointed by TTC; and four are appointed by TTC from a list of candidates submitted by the South Central High Speed Rail Authority Inc., a local government corporation organized under Chapter 431, Subchapter D, Transportation Code.

Sec. 91.122. DEVELOPMENT OF SYSTEM. Authorizes TTC, subject to TTC's oversight and control under Chapter 431, to direct the corporation created under Section 91.121 to:

(1) plan and develop a high-speed rail facility under the authority in this chapter;

(2) solicit federal funding to be allocated to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for the purposes of this subchapter;

(3) coordinate with federal planners and representatives from adjacent states for the interconnectivity of high-speed rail systems in this state with systems developed in federally designated high-speed rail corridors in other states;

(4) represent and negotiate on behalf of this state for the interconnectivity of high-speed rail with existing and planned transportation systems, including airports, seaports, transit systems, commuter rail systems, and highways; and

(5) coordinate with federal transportation planners and officials at the United States Department of Defense or its successor agency regarding issues related to the provision of connectivity to military installations in this state.

Sec. 91.123. **SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS.** Requires a high-speed rail system developed under this subchapter to enhance connectivity to this state's largest airports, enhance connectivity for and ease of passenger transport to and from military installations located in this state, and be developed in collaboration with high-speed rail projects in other areas of the United States to ensure interconnectivity with other federally designated high-speed rail corridors.

Sec. 91.124. **REPORTS.** Requires TxDOT to annually submit a report regarding the activities of TxDOT and the corporation under this subchapter to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committee of each house of the legislature that has primary jurisdiction over rail transportation issues.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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