

By: Solomons

H.B. No. 1950

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to state travel policies and procedures for the reimbursement or payment of travel expenses.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 660.024(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The chief administrator of a state agency must give advance written approval for any travel related to official state business for which a reimbursement for travel expenses is claimed or for which an advance for travel expenses to be incurred is sought. The advance [~~A copy of the~~] written approval may [~~shall~~] be communicated electronically [~~submitted with the travel voucher to the comptroller in accordance with Section 660.027~~].

SECTION 2. Sections 660.027(b), (d), and (e), Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b) A voucher submitted under Subsection (a) is valid only if:

(1) the state agency submitting the voucher approves it in accordance with Chapter 2103 and, if required by law, certifies the voucher; and

(2) the state employee who incurred the travel expense or, if the employee is unavailable, another individual acceptable to the comptroller approves the description, information, and documentation required by Subsection (d) [~~voucher~~] in writing or

1 electronically, except that the employee's approval is not required
2 if another person is required by law to provide the approval.

3 (d) A voucher must be supported by:

4 (1) a description of [~~describe~~] the official state
5 business performed; and

6 (2) [~~be accompanied by~~] the information and
7 documentation that the comptroller considers necessary for the
8 comptroller to determine compliance with this chapter, the travel
9 provisions of the General Appropriations Act, and the rules adopted
10 by the comptroller under this chapter.

11 (e) The comptroller may require a state agency to provide to
12 the comptroller the description, information, and documentation
13 required under [~~by~~] Subsection (d):

14 (1) on the form adopted by the comptroller under
15 Subsection (c);

16 (2) electronically;

17 (3) by submitting receipts or other documents; or

18 (4) [~~(3)~~] by any [~~a~~] combination of Subdivisions (1),
19 [~~and~~] (2), and (3).

20 SECTION 3. Section 660.028, Government Code, is amended by
21 amending Subsections (b), (c), and (d) and adding Subsection (e) to
22 read as follows:

23 (b) If the comptroller audits a state agency's voucher after
24 the comptroller issues a warrant or initiates an electronic funds
25 transfer in response to the voucher, the comptroller may require
26 the agency to maintain in its files the description, information,
27 and documentation [~~receipts~~] relating to the travel expense paid or

1 reimbursed by the voucher until the comptroller audits the voucher.

2 (c) If a state agency pays or reimburses a travel expense
3 without first submitting a voucher to the comptroller, the
4 comptroller may audit the payment or reimbursement for compliance
5 with this chapter and the travel provisions of the General
6 Appropriations Act. The comptroller may report the results of the
7 audit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the
8 house of representatives, the state auditor, and the Legislative
9 Budget Board. The state agency shall cooperate with the
10 comptroller and make available the description, information, and
11 documentation [~~receipts~~] required by the comptroller at the time
12 and in the manner required by the comptroller.

13 (d) The comptroller may require a state agency to maintain
14 in its files the description, information, and documentation
15 [~~receipts~~] regarding a travel expense payment or reimbursement for
16 the period required by the comptroller.

17 (e) The comptroller may require or authorize the
18 description, information, and documentation relating to a travel
19 expense payment or reimbursement to be maintained in paper form or
20 electronically.

21 SECTION 4. Sections 660.043(b) and (d), Government Code,
22 are amended to read as follows:

23 (b) For the purpose of Subsection (a), the shortest route
24 between two points is presumed to be the most cost-effective route.
25 A longer route may be considered the most cost-effective route only
26 if:

27 (1) the documentation [~~voucher~~] states that the longer

1 route is more cost effective;

2 (2) the documentation [~~voucher~~] provides a reasonable
3 justification for that statement; and

4 (3) the statement and justification are made by the
5 chief administrator of the state agency making the reimbursement or
6 by the chief administrator's designee.

7 (d) If the number of miles between points is not shown in the
8 guide, the mileage incurred while traveling between those points is
9 not reimbursable unless:

10 (1) the documentation [~~voucher~~] itemizes the mileage
11 on a point-to-point basis; and

12 (2) the mileage is reasonable.

13 SECTION 5. Section 660.147(b), Government Code, is amended
14 to read as follows:

15 (b) A state agency may not pay or reimburse a state employee
16 for a travel expense associated with a training seminar conducted
17 by the agency for its employees unless the chief administrator of
18 the agency or the administrator's designee certifies in the
19 supporting documentation [~~on the voucher or other expense~~
20 ~~reimbursement form~~] that the agency:

21 (1) does not possess interactive television or video
22 conference facilities at the designated headquarters of the
23 employees attending the seminar;

24 (2) cannot purchase or lease such facilities at a cost
25 less than the total travel expenses associated with the seminar;
26 and

27 (3) does not have access to another agency's

1 facilities at the same location.

2 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.