

By: Carona

S.B. No. 502

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the authority of the Texas Department of Transportation, counties, and certain toll project entities and regional mobility authorities to enter into funding agreements to expedite the entity's environmental review duties related to certain transportation projects.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 222, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 222.004 to read as follows:

Sec. 222.004. AUTHORIZATION TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO EXPEDITE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW. (a) The department, a county, a regional tollway authority operating under Chapter 366, or a regional mobility authority operating under Chapter 370 may enter into an agreement to provide funds to a state or federal agency to expedite the agency's performance of its duties related to the environmental review process for transportation projects:

(1) of the department;

(2) listed in a metropolitan planning organization's long-range transportation plan under 23 U.S.C. Section 134; or

(3) of a county, a regional tollway authority operating under Chapter 366, or a regional mobility authority operating under Chapter 370.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), an agreement entered into under this section:

1           (1) may specify transportation projects the  
2 applicable entity considers to be priorities for review; and

3           (2) must require the agency receiving money to  
4 complete the environmental review in less time than is customary  
5 for the completion of environmental review by that agency.

6           (c) The department may enter into a separate agreement for a  
7 transportation project that the department determines has regional  
8 importance.

9           (d) An agreement entered into under this section does not  
10 diminish or modify the rights of the public regarding review and  
11 comment on transportation projects.

12           (e) An entity entering into an agreement under this section  
13 shall make the agreement available on the entity's Internet  
14 website.

15           SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
16 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
17 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
18 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
19 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.