

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
82R3654 AJZ-D

H.B. 885
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Transportation & Homeland Security
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

This bill would allow for the uniform installation of pedestrian crossing lights and freeway entrance control signals by changing current law that requires motorists to stop at any dark traffic signal display (as if it were a stop sign).

A pedestrian hybrid beacon is similar to a traffic light and flashes yellow, turns red so pedestrians can safely cross, and then dims allowing traffic to continue as normal. The beacons are especially helpful on busy streets where it can be tough for pedestrians to cross, and they also increase a motorist's awareness of when a pedestrian is crossing.

Motorists would still be required to stop at other dark traffic signals but the law would provide an exception for pedestrian hybrid beacons and also similar signals at freeway entrance points. Pedestrian beacons and freeway entrance control signals are currently being utilized in 21 states, and there are pilot projects in Austin and various other Texas cities.

The device has been vetted by organizations such as the Federal Highway Administration, the Transportation Research Board, and many others, but the Texas Department of Transportation is unable to include the beacons in its *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* due to conflict with the current statute.

H.B. 885 amends current law relating to the operation and movement of a vehicle when certain traffic-control signals do not display an indication.

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 Section 544.007, Transportation Code, by amending Subsection (i) and adding Subsection (j), as follows:

(i) Requires an operator of a vehicle facing a traffic-control signal, other than a freeway entrance ramp control signal or a pedestrian hybrid beacon, that does not display an indication in any of the signal heads to stop as provided by Section 544.010 (Stop Signs and Yield Signs) as if the intersection had a stop sign.

(j) Defines, in this section, "freeway entrance ramp control signal" and "pedestrian hybrid beacon."

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.