

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 993
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Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, firefighters do not have explicit authority to close lanes of traffic in the event of an emergency. As a result, a firefighter may be unable to secure an area in which an accident has occurred. Instances have occurred in which a firefighter has been injured at the scene of an accident because of this lack of authority to close a road or highway. H.B. 993 grants a firefighter the authority to close lanes of traffic in the event of an emergency, thereby preventing incidents in which emergency workers are injured and equipment is damaged.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 993 amends the Transportation Code to authorize a firefighter who is employed by or is a member of, as applicable, a fire department operated by an emergency services district, a volunteer fire department, or a fire department of a general-law municipality to close one or more lanes of a road or highway in the performance of official duties to protect the safety of persons or property. The bill requires the closure to be limited to the affected lane or lanes and one additional lane unless the safety of emergency personnel operating on the road or highway requires more lanes to be closed. The bill requires a firefighter, in closing the lanes of a road or highway, to deploy one or more authorized emergency vehicles with audible and visual signals that meet the equipment requirements for those vehicles.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2011.