

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1831
By: Wentworth, Nichols
Transportation & Homeland Security
8/3/2011
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The El Camino Real de las Tejas National Historic Trail (trail) runs from the East Texas border near San Augustine to the South Texas border near Laredo. The trail was originally established to connect a series of missions and posts between Monclova, Mexico, and Los Andaes, the first capital of the province of Texas. The trail constituted the only primary overland route from the Rio Grande to the Red River Valley in Louisiana during the Spanish colonial period from 1690-1821.

The United States Congress added the trail to the National Trails System on October 18, 2004, and its designation commemorates significant historic routes extending from the United States-Mexico international border at the Rio Grande to the eastern boundary of the Spanish province of Texas in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana.

S.B. 1831 amends current law to designate the trail as a historic highway and allow for the placement of signage identifying the trail along certain state and federal highways. Signs identifying the trail in Texas, from Louisiana to Mexico, will greatly enhance the educational aspects of the trail, while marking key sites from the state's history and promoting tourism.

Pursuant to S.B. 1831, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will not be required to design, construct, or erect a marker unless TxDOT receives a grant or donation of funds to cover associated costs. Federal funds dedicated to highway enhancement may be pursued for this purpose.

S.B. 1831 amends current law relating to the designation of the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail as a historical highway.

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 442.021, Government Code, by adding Subsections (c), (d), (e), and (f), as follows:

(c) Requires the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to cooperate with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to designate, interpret, and market the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail (trail) as a Texas historic highway.

(d) Authorizes THC and TxDOT, to supplement revenue available for the purposes under Subsection (c), to pursue federal funds dedicated to highway enhancement.

(e) Prohibits a designation of the trail as a Texas historic highway from being construed as a designation under the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. Section 470 et seq.).

(f) Provides that TxDOT is not required to design, construct, or erect a marker under this section unless a grant or donation of funds is made to TxDOT to cover the cost of the design, construction, and erection of the marker. Requires that money received to cover the cost of the marker be deposited to the credit of the state highway fund.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2011.