

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 159
By: Carona
Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In Texas, county judges have responsibility for emergency preparedness and response within their local jurisdictions. These officials may appoint an emergency management coordinator to manage day-to-day program activities.

Increasingly, urban areas are hiring professional emergency managers who may be highly trained in incident command and response but, not being law enforcement officers, firefighters, or health personnel, must mix with regular traffic when rushing to a disaster site, as current statutes do not recognize emergency managers among those authorized to use lights and sirens.

S.B. 159 amends Section 541.201 (Definitions), Transportation Code, to add language that will authorize county owned or leased emergency management vehicles to be classified as emergency vehicles authorized to operate with red and blue lights and sirens.

S.B. 159 amends current law relating to the definition of an authorized emergency vehicle.

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

SECTION 1. Amends Section 541.201(1), Transportation Code, as follows:

- (1) Defines "authorized emergency vehicle" to include a county-owned or county-leased emergency management vehicle that has been designated or authorized by the commissioners court. Changes a reference to the Texas Department of Health to the Department of Health State Services, and makes nonsubstantive changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2013.