

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 510
By: Nichols
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Unfortunately, highway workers are losing their lives as a result of being struck by traveling motorists while on the job. It has been reported that, since the 1930s, over 100 Texas Department of Transportation employees working within a work zone or near the shoulder of a roadway have died as a result of being struck by motorists, with several of these fatalities occurring within the last decade. Interested parties note that working and traveling on highways in Texas would be safer if Texas would require motorists to vacate the lane closest to the highway maintenance or construction vehicle or to slow down when nearing a stopped highway maintenance or construction vehicle if the vehicle has overhead lights activated. Recent legislation sometimes referred to as the move over/slow down law requires a driver approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle or a stationary tow truck with lights activated to either slow down or change lanes. S.B. 510 seeks to improve highway worker safety by expanding vehicles to which the move over/slow down law applies.

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

S.B. 510 amends the Transportation Code to make the requirement for a motor vehicle operator, on approaching a stationary emergency vehicle or tow truck, either to vacate the lane closest to the stationary vehicle or to slow to a specified speed unless otherwise directed by a police officer applicable to a motor vehicle operator on approaching a Texas Department of Transportation vehicle that is not separated from the roadway by a traffic control channelizing device as defined by the bill and is using visual signals that comply with applicable standards and specifications for maintenance and service equipment.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.