

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
83R2838 JRR-D

S.B. 1017
By: Paxton
Transportation
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The State of Texas operates 12 travel information centers that provide travelers with tourism information and rest areas. The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) *Government Effectiveness and Efficiency Report* indicates a decline in the use of travel counselors and approximately one percent of out-of-state travelers currently utilize a travel information center during their trip.

S.B. 1017 follows the LBB recommendation to shift the source of funding for the travel information centers to increase the revenue available in the state highway fund to be used for transportation projects.

As proposed, S.B. 1017 amends current law relating to the operation of state travel information centers by private and nonprofit entities.

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 204.003, Transportation Code, as follows:

Sec. 204.003. TRAVEL INFORMATION CENTERS. (a) Defines "travel information center" in this section. Deletes existing text requiring the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to maintain and operate travel information centers at the principal gateways to this state to provide certain items.

(b) Requires TxDOT to issue a request for proposals to private and nonprofit entities for the operation of a travel information center.

(c) Requires TxDOT to maintain and operate the center as a rest area without staff if TxDOT finds none of the offers from its request for proposals acceptable or is unable to comply with federal law in issuing a contract under this section.

(d) Provides that this section does not apply to a travel information center located at the State Capitol.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 204.004, Transportation Code, as follows:

Sec. 204.004. PAYMENT OF COSTS. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Authorizes TxDOT to pay from highway revenues the cost, including the administration and operation cost, of:

(1) developing, publishing, and distributing material; and

(2) maintaining and operating travel information centers.

(b) Prohibits TxDOT, notwithstanding Subsection (a)(2), from paying from highway revenues the cost including the administration and operation cost, of operating a travel information center on or after August 31, 2014, provided that TxDOT is authorized to pay for the cost of maintaining and operating a travel information center as an unstaffed rest area.

SECTION 3. Requires TxDOT to initiate the process of contracting the operation of travel information centers to a private or nonprofit entity not later than September 1, 2013. Requires TxDOT to contract for the operation of travel information centers or cease staffing the travel information centers as required by Section 204.003, Transportation Code, as amended by this Act, not later than August 31, 2014.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.