

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 71
By: Martinez
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Concerns have been raised about the absence of a regional transit authority in certain areas of the Rio Grande Valley. H.B. 71 seeks to address these concerns by creating a regional transit authority in order to provide for a united comprehensive effort in the development and sustainability of regional public transit services in these areas.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill expressly does one or more of the following: creates a criminal offense, increases the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or changes the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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. 71 amends the Transportation Code to authorize the creation of a regional transit authority in a county that is contiguous to the Gulf of Mexico or a bay or inlet opening into the gulf and that borders the United Mexican States and in a county that borders such a county. The bill provides for the creation of an authority by means of a resolution or order adopted by the board of directors of the regional planning commission established for the area of the authority and a confirmation election submitted to the qualified voters of each county in the authority. The bill provides for the management of a confirmed authority by an executive committee composed of the board of directors of the regional planning commission established for the area of the authority. The bill establishes that officers elected by the commission's board of directors serve as the officers of the executive committee.

H.B. 71 sets out the powers of the regional transit authority and authorizes an authority to operate a public transportation system. The bill authorizes an authority to coordinate the provision of transportation services with a municipality and include the services provided by the municipality in the authority's service plan. The bill authorizes an authority to issue bonds and collect fares and other charges. The bill, if it receives a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to each house, authorizes an authority to exercise the power of eminent domain under certain circumstances. The bill sets out provisions relating to the system plan and location of a station or terminal complex and creates a misdemeanor offense punishable by a maximum fine of \$100 for a person who uses the public transportation system of an authority without paying the appropriate fare. The bill establishes provisions relating to the authority of an entity that operates an international bridge to enter into a written agreement with a regional transit authority to impose a fee for the use of the bridge.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.