86R26410 JRR-D

By:  Krause, Metcalf, et al. H.B. No. 1951

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 1951:

By:  Leman C.S.H.B. No. 1951

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the development, construction, and operation of toll projects; authorizing an administrative fee; imposing a civil penalty.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

ARTICLE 1. COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS FOR CERTAIN TOLL PROJECTS

SECTION 1.01.  Subchapter E, Chapter 223, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Sections 223.2014 and 223.2015 to read as follows:

Sec. 223.2014.  COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE ENTITY FOR TOLL PROJECT. (a) The department may enter into a comprehensive development agreement with a private entity for a project described by Section 223.201(a)(1) or (2) if:

(1)  the estimated capital costs for construction of the project exceed $1 billion;

(2)  the department demonstrates that state funding for the project is not available without significant reprioritization of existing funds that are designated for other highway improvement projects; and

(3)  the construction of the project does not require the use of money in the state highway fund.

(b)  The department may enter into not more than two comprehensive development agreements under this section during each fiscal year.

Sec. 223.2015.  VOTER APPROVAL OF CERTAIN PROJECTS REQUIRED; ELECTION. (a) This section applies only to a project that is the subject of a comprehensive development agreement under Section 223.2014.

(b)  Notwithstanding any other law, the department or a private entity may not construct or operate a project described by Subsection (a) unless the project is approved by a majority of voters voting:

(1)  in all counties in which a portion of the project is to be located at an election held for that purpose, subject to Subdivision (2); or

(2)  in each county in which a portion of the project is to be located at an election held for that purpose, if the project is to be located in:

(A)  at least one county that has a population of 500,000 or more; and

(B)  at least one county that has a population of not more than 50,000.

(c)  On request of the department, the commissioners court of each county in which a portion of a project described by Subsection (a) is to be located shall order an election under this section, provided that the election may not be ordered until the scope of the project has been finalized, including:

(1)  the route of the project;

(2)  the number of lanes of the project or, if the project is an improvement, extension, or expansion of an existing highway, the number of new or modified lanes;

(3)  the number of tolled lanes added by the project; and

(4)  the method of financing for the project.

(d)  An election under this section must be held on the first November uniform election date that allows sufficient time to comply with other requirements of law.

(e)  The ballot at an election held under this section must state specific information about the project, including:

(1)  the information described by Subsections (c)(1)-(4); and

(2)  for each tolled lane added by the project, whether the toll charged will be at a variable or static toll rate.

(f)  The department shall contract with each county in which a portion of the project is to be located in a manner prescribed by Subchapter D, Chapter 31, Election Code.

(g)  At an election under this section, the ballot must be printed to provide for voting for or against the approval of the project.

(h)  An election under this section may not be held earlier than the fifth anniversary of the date of a previous election to approve the same or a substantially similar project, provided that an election under this section may be held for a different project regardless of whether the project involves the same private entity or some or all of the counties involved in a previous election held under this section.

ARTICLE 2. PAYMENT OF TOLLS

SECTION 2.01.  Chapter 372, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Subchapter B-1 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER B-1. TOLL COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

Sec. 372.071.  DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "registered owner" means an owner as defined by Section 502.001.

Sec. 372.072.  TOLL PAYMENT REQUIRED; EMERGENCY VEHICLES EXEMPT. (a) The operator of a vehicle, other than an authorized emergency vehicle as defined by Section 541.201, that is driven or towed through a toll collection facility of a toll project shall pay the proper toll. The exemption from payment of a toll for an authorized emergency vehicle applies regardless of whether the vehicle is:

(1)  responding to an emergency;

(2)  displaying a flashing light; or

(3)  marked as an emergency vehicle.

(b)  Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a toll project entity may waive the requirement of the payment of a toll or may authorize the payment of a reduced toll for any vehicle or class of vehicles.

Sec. 372.073.  TOLL NOT PAID AT TIME OF USE; INVOICE. (a) As an alternative to requiring payment of a toll at the time a vehicle is driven or towed through a toll collection facility, a toll project entity shall use video billing or other tolling methods to permit the registered owner of the vehicle to pay the toll at a later date.

(b)  A toll project entity may use automated enforcement technology, including video recordings, photography, electronic data, and transponders, or other tolling methods to identify the registered owner of the vehicle for purposes of billing, collection, and enforcement activities.

(c)  A toll project entity shall send by first class mail to the registered owner of a vehicle a written invoice containing an assessment for tolls incurred by the vehicle.

(d)  A toll project entity shall send the invoice required under Subsection (c) and related communications to:

(1)  the registered owner's address as shown in the vehicle registration records of the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles or the analogous department or agency of another state or country; or

(2)  an alternate address provided by the owner or derived through other reliable means.

(e)  A toll project entity may provide that the invoice required under Subsection (c), instead of being sent by first class mail, be sent as an electronic record to a registered owner that agrees to the terms of the electronic record transmission of the information.

Sec. 372.074.  INVOICE REQUIREMENTS; PAYMENT DUE DATE. An invoice containing an assessment for the use of a toll project must:

(1)  require payment not later than the 30th day after the date the invoice is mailed; and

(2)  conspicuously state:

(A)  the amount due;

(B)  the date by which the amount due must be paid;

(C)  that failure to pay the amount due in the required period will result in the assessment of an administrative fee; and

(D)  that failure to pay two or more invoices will result in a civil penalty.

Sec. 372.075.  PAYMENT OF TOLL INVOICE; ADMINISTRATIVE FEE. (a) A person who receives an invoice under this subchapter for the use of a toll project shall, not later than the due date specified in the invoice:

(1)  pay the amount owed as stated in the invoice; or

(2)  send a written request to the toll project entity for a review of the toll assessments contained in the invoice.

(b)  If a person fails to comply with Subsection (a), a toll project entity may add an administrative fee, not to exceed $6, to the amount the person owes. The toll project entity:

(1)  must set the administrative fee by rule in an amount that does not exceed the cost of collecting the toll; and

(2)  may not charge a person more than $48 in administrative fees in a 12-month period.

(c)  A toll project entity other than a county under Chapter 284 may contract, in accordance with Section 2107.003, Government Code, with a person to collect the unpaid toll and any applicable administrative fee before referring the matter to a court with jurisdiction over a civil penalty under Section 372.076.

Sec. 372.076.  CIVIL PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO PAY TWO OR MORE INVOICES. (a) A person who receives two or more invoices for unpaid tolls and who has not paid the amounts due on or before the due dates specified in the invoices is subject to a civil penalty of $25. Only one civil penalty may be assessed in a six-month period. An appropriate district or county attorney may sue to collect the civil penalty and the underlying toll and administrative fee.

(b)  In determining liability for a civil penalty under this section, it is presumed that the unpaid invoices were received on the fifth day after the date of mailing.

(c)  It is a defense to liability for a civil penalty under this section that the person:

(1)  is not liable for payment of each toll assessed in the unpaid invoices; or

(2)  paid the amount owed in the invoices pertaining to each toll assessed in the invoices that the person is liable for.

(d)  The court in which a person is found liable for a civil penalty under Subsection (a) shall collect the civil penalty, unpaid tolls, administrative fees, and any additional court costs and forward the amounts to the appropriate toll project entity.

Sec. 372.077.  EXCEPTIONS TO TOLL LIABILITY: LEASED, TRANSFERRED, OR STOLEN VEHICLE. (a) It is an exception to liability of a vehicle's registered owner for a toll incurred by the vehicle if the registered owner of the vehicle is a lessor of the vehicle and not later than the 30th day after the date the invoice containing an assessment of the toll is mailed provides to the appropriate toll project entity:

(1)  a copy of the rental, lease, or other contract document covering the vehicle on the date the toll was incurred, with the name and address of the lessee clearly legible; or

(2)  electronic data, in a format agreed on by the toll project entity and the lessor, other than a photocopy or scan of a rental or lease contract, that contains the information required under Sections 521.460(c)(1), (2), and (3) covering the vehicle on the date the toll was incurred.

(b)  If the lessor provides the required information within the period prescribed under Subsection (a), the toll project entity may send an invoice to the lessee at the address provided under Subsection (a) by first class mail not later than the 30th day after the date of receipt of the required information from the lessor.

(c)  It is an exception to liability of a vehicle's registered owner for a toll incurred by the vehicle if the registered owner of the vehicle:

(1)  transferred ownership of the vehicle to another person before the toll was incurred;

(2)  submitted written notice of the transfer to the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles in accordance with Section 501.147; and

(3)  not later than the 30th day after the date the invoice is mailed, provides to the appropriate toll project entity the name and address of the person to whom the vehicle was transferred.

(d)  If the former owner of the vehicle provides the required information within the period prescribed under Subsection (c), the toll project entity may send an invoice to the person to whom ownership of the vehicle was transferred at the address provided by the former owner by first class mail not later than the 30th day after the date of receipt of the required information from the former owner.

(e)  It is an exception to liability of a vehicle's registered owner for a toll incurred by the vehicle if:

(1)  the vehicle in question was stolen before the toll was incurred and was not recovered by the time the toll was incurred; and

(2)  the theft was reported to the appropriate law enforcement authority before the earlier of:

(A)  the time the toll was incurred; or

(B)  eight hours after the discovery of the theft.

Sec. 372.078.  PRESUMPTION. Proof that a vehicle passed through a toll collection facility without payment of the proper toll, together with proof that the invoice recipient was the registered owner or the driver of the vehicle when the toll was incurred, creates a presumption that the invoice recipient is liable for the toll incurred by the vehicle. The proof may be by a written statement of a peace officer or toll project entity employee, video surveillance, or any other reasonable evidence, including:

(1)  evidence obtained by automated enforcement technology that the toll project entity determines is necessary, including automated enforcement technology described by Section 372.073(b); or

(2)  a copy of the rental, lease, or other contract document or the electronic data provided to the toll project entity under Section 372.077(a) that shows that the invoice recipient was the lessee of the vehicle when the toll was incurred.

Sec. 372.079.  CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION RELATED TO TOLL COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT. Information collected for the purposes of this subchapter, including contact, payment, and other account information and trip data, is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code.

ARTICLE 3. CONFORMING CHANGES

SECTION 3.01.  Section 102.0213, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 102.0213.  COURT COSTS ON CONVICTION: TRANSPORTATION CODE. A person convicted of an offense shall pay the following under the Transportation Code, in addition to all other costs:

(1)  court cost on conviction of a misdemeanor under Subtitle C, Title 7, Transportation Code (Sec. 542.403, Transportation Code) . . . $3;

(2)  cost for impoundment of vehicle (Sec. 601.263, Transportation Code) . . . $15 per day; and

(3)  a civil [~~and criminal~~] enforcement cost on a finding of liability for a civil penalty in connection with an assessed [~~conviction of an offense of, or related to, the nonpayment of a~~] toll in certain counties (Sec. 284.2031, Transportation Code) . . . $1.

SECTION 3.02.  Section 223.201(b), Transportation Code, is transferred to Subchapter E, Chapter 223, Transportation Code, redesignated as Section 223.2001, Transportation Code, and amended to read as follows:

Sec. 223.2001.  DEFINITION.  [~~(b)~~] In this subchapter, "comprehensive development agreement" means an agreement that, at a minimum, provides for the design and construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, expansion, or improvement of a project described in Section 223.201(a) [~~Subsection (a)~~] and may also provide for the financing, acquisition, maintenance, or operation of a project described in that section [~~Subsection (a)~~].

SECTION 3.03.  Subchapter E, Chapter 223, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 223.2002 to read as follows:

Sec. 223.2002.  LIMITATION. The department may enter into a comprehensive development agreement only:

(1)  for projects authorized under this subchapter; or

(2)  as provided by Subchapter F.

SECTION 3.04.  Sections 223.201(f) and (g), Transportation Code, are amended to read as follows:

(f)  The department may enter into a comprehensive development agreement [~~only~~] for all or part of[~~:~~

[~~(1)~~]  the State Highway 99 (Grand Parkway) project[~~;~~

[~~(2)  the Interstate Highway 35E managed lanes project in Dallas and Denton Counties from Interstate Highway 635 to U.S. Highway 380;~~

[~~(3)  the Interstate Highway 35W project in Tarrant County from Interstate Highway 30 to State Highway 114;~~

[~~(4)  the State Highway 183 managed lanes project in Tarrant and Dallas Counties from State Highway 121 to Interstate Highway 35E;~~

[~~(5)  the Interstate Highway 35E/U.S. Highway 67 Southern Gateway project in Dallas County, including:~~

[~~(A)  Interstate Highway 35E from 8th Street to Interstate Highway 20; and~~

[~~(B)  U.S. Highway 67 from Interstate Highway 35E to Farm-to-Market Road 1382 (Belt Line Road);~~

[~~(6)  the State Highway 288 project from U.S. Highway 59 to south of State Highway 6 in Brazoria County and Harris County;~~

[~~(7)  the U.S. Highway 290 managed lanes project in Harris County from Interstate Highway 610 to State Highway 99;~~

[~~(8)  the Interstate Highway 820 project from State Highway 183 to Randol Mill Road;~~

[~~(9)  the State Highway 114 project in Dallas County from State Highway 121 to State Highway 183;~~

[~~(10)  the Loop 12 project in Dallas County from State Highway 183 to Interstate Highway 35E;~~

[~~(11)  the Loop 9 project in Dallas and Ellis Counties from Interstate Highway 20 to U.S. Highway 67; and~~

[~~(12)  the U.S. Highway 181 Harbor Bridge project in Nueces County between U.S. Highway 181 at Beach Avenue and Interstate Highway 37~~].

(g)  The department may combine in a comprehensive development agreement under this subchapter:

(1)  a toll project and a rail facility as defined by Section 91.001; or

(2)  two or more projects for which the department is authorized under this subchapter to enter into a comprehensive development agreement [~~described by Subsection (f)~~].

SECTION 3.05.  Section 223.2012(a), Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  In this section, the North Tarrant Express project is the project on Interstate Highway 35W in Tarrant County from Interstate Highway 30 to State Highway 114 that was [~~described by Section 223.201(f)(3)~~] entered into on June 23, 2009.

SECTION 3.06.  Section 228.059, Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 228.059.  TOLL COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT BY OTHER ENTITY. An entity operating a toll lane pursuant to Section 228.007(b) has, with regard to toll collection and enforcement for that toll lane, the same powers and duties as the department under this chapter and Subchapter B-1, Chapter 372. The entity may use revenues for improvement, extension, expansion, or maintenance of the toll lane.

SECTION 3.07.  Section 228.104(a), Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The principal of, interest on, and any redemption premium on bonds issued by the commission under this subchapter are payable solely from:

(1)  the revenue of the toll project or system for which the bonds are issued, including tolls pledged to pay the bonds;

(2)  the proceeds of bonds issued for the project or system;

(3)  the amounts deposited in a debt service reserve fund as required by the trust agreement securing bonds issued for the project or system;

(4)  amounts received under a credit agreement relating to the project or system for which the bonds are issued;

(5)  surplus revenue of another project or system as authorized by Section 228.006; and

(6)  amounts received by the department:

(A)  as pass-through tolls under Section 222.104;

(B)  under an agreement with a local governmental entity entered into under Section 228.254;

(C)  under other agreements with a local governmental entity relating to the project or system for which the bonds are issued; and

(D)  under a comprehensive development agreement entered into under Subchapter E, Chapter 223 [~~Section 223.201~~].

SECTION 3.08.  The heading to Subchapter D, Chapter 284, Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER D. MISCELLANEOUS TOLL COLLECTION PROVISIONS [~~UNAUTHORIZED USE OF TOLL ROADS IN CERTAIN COUNTIES~~]

SECTION 3.09.  The heading to Section 284.2031, Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 284.2031.  CIVIL [~~AND CRIMINAL~~] ENFORCEMENT COST.

SECTION 3.10.  Section 284.2031(a), Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  A county may impose, in addition to other costs, $1 as a court cost on the imposition of a civil penalty [~~conviction to a defendant convicted of an offense~~] under Section 372.076 [~~284.070, 284.0701, or 284.203~~] in an action brought by the county or district attorney.

SECTION 3.11.  Subchapter E, Chapter 366, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 366.186 to read as follows:

Sec. 366.186.  OTHER POWERS AND DUTIES RELATED TO TOLL COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT. In addition to the other powers and duties provided by this chapter and Chapter 372, an authority has the same powers and duties as the department under Chapter 228, a county under Chapter 284, and a regional mobility authority under Chapter 370 regarding the authority's toll collection and enforcement powers for:

(1)  the authority's turnpike projects; and

(2)  other toll projects developed, financed, constructed, or operated under an agreement, including a comprehensive development agreement, with the authority.

SECTION 3.12.  Subchapter E, Chapter 370, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 370.194 to read as follows:

Sec. 370.194.  OTHER POWERS AND DUTIES RELATED TO TOLL COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT. In addition to the other powers and duties provided by this chapter and Chapter 372, an authority has the same powers and duties as the department under Chapter 228, a county under Chapter 284, and a regional tollway authority under Chapter 366 regarding the authority's toll collection and enforcement powers for:

(1)  the authority's turnpike projects; and

(2)  other toll projects developed, financed, constructed, or operated under an agreement with the authority or another entity.

SECTION 3.13.  The heading to Subchapter C, Chapter 372, Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER C. ADDITIONAL REMEDIES AND PROCEDURES FOR NONPAYMENT OF TOLLS: CERTAIN TOLL PROJECT ENTITIES[~~; REMEDIES~~]

SECTION 3.14.  Section 372.102(a), Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  Notwithstanding the confidentiality of electronic toll collection customer account information, including confidentiality under Sections 228.057(e), [~~366.178(b-1),~~] 366.179(d), [~~370.177(m), and~~] 370.178(d), and 372.079, a toll project entity may publish a list of the names of the registered owners or lessees of nonpaying vehicles who at the time of publication are liable for the payment of past due and unpaid tolls or administrative fees. The list may include only the persons' names and, for each person listed:

(1)  the city and state of the person's residence;

(2)  the total number of events of nonpayment; and

(3)  the total amount due for the tolls and administrative fees.

SECTION 3.15.  The heading to Section 372.105, Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 372.105.  INVOICES PROVIDED IN PERSON FOR USE OF TOLL PROJECT [~~NONPAYMENT~~] BY VEHICLES NOT REGISTERED IN THIS STATE.

SECTION 3.16.  Sections 372.105(a) and (b), Transportation Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a)  A toll project entity may, in lieu of mailing an invoice [~~a written notice of nonpayment~~], serve with an invoice [~~a written notice of nonpayment~~] in person an owner of a vehicle that is not registered in this state, including the owner of a vehicle registered in another state of the United States, the United Mexican States, a state of the United Mexican States, or another country or territory. An invoice [~~A notice of nonpayment~~] may also be served by an employee of a governmental entity operating an international bridge at the time a vehicle with a record of nonpayment seeks to enter or leave this state.

(b)  An invoice [~~Each written notice of nonpayment~~] issued under Subsection (a) must be paid not later than the due date specified in the invoice [~~shall include a warning that the failure to pay the amounts in the notice may result in the toll project entity's exercise of the habitual violator remedies under this subchapter~~].

SECTION 3.17.  Section 541.201(13-a), Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

(13-a)  "Police vehicle" means a vehicle used by a peace officer, as defined by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, for law enforcement purposes that:

(A)  is owned or leased by a governmental entity;

(B)  is owned or leased by the police department of a private institution of higher education that commissions peace officers under Section 51.212, Education Code; or

(C)  is:

(i)  a private vehicle owned or leased by the peace officer; and

(ii)  approved for use for law enforcement purposes by the head of the law enforcement agency that employs the peace officer, or by that person's designee, provided that use of the private vehicle must, if applicable, comply with any rule adopted by the commissioners court of a county under Section 170.001, Local Government Code, and that the private vehicle may not be considered an authorized emergency vehicle for exemption purposes under Section 372.072 [~~228.054, 284.070, 366.178, or 370.177~~], Transportation Code, unless the vehicle is marked.

ARTICLE 4. REPEALERS

SECTION 4.01.  The following provisions of the Transportation Code are repealed:

(1)  Sections 223.201(i), (j), (k), (l), and (m);

(2)  Section 223.2011;

(3)  Sections 228.001(3-a), 228.054, 228.0545, 228.0546, 228.0547, 228.055, and 228.056;

(4)  Sections 284.070, 284.0701, 284.0702, 284.202, 284.203, 284.2031(b), 284.2032, 284.204, 284.205, 284.206, 284.207, 284.208, 284.209, 284.210, 284.211, and 284.212;

(5)  Section 366.178;

(6)  Section 370.177;

(7)  Sections 372.105(c), (d), (e), and (f);

(8)  Sections 372.106, 372.107, 372.108, 372.109, 372.110, 372.111, 372.112, 372.113, 372.114, and 372.115; and

(9)  Section 502.011.

ARTICLE 5. TRANSITION; EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 5.01.  The changes in law made by this Act regarding the collection of tolls apply only to a toll incurred on or after the effective date of this Act. A toll incurred before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the toll was incurred, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 5.02.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.