

September 17, 2020

The Honorable Terry Canales, Chairman
Texas House Committee on Transportation
Capitol Station
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Delivered via e-mail

Dear Chairman Canales:

The North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on Interim Charge 1A, relating to the implementation and effectiveness of H.B. 803 and S.B. 198. NTTA contributed to the development of the House and Senate legislation, working with the bill authors and transportation committees in both chambers to secure passage of these bills.

NTTA supports legislation that improves tolling operations and ensures customers receive the best value for their toll dollars. Our agency operates more than 1,000 lane miles of toll roads, serving more than 12 million customers, with about 6 million TollTags in circulation. Our customers drive our success.

H.B. 803 adds more clarity to our already award-winning transparency in data reporting. S.B. 198, a project that began in 85th Legislative Session, codifies some of the best practices in toll collections from a toll operator and customer perspective.

We want to thank the House Committee on Transportation staff for helping us contribute to the passage of these bills last year. The bills reflect many of our recommendations to best capture the author's intent as the intent applies to daily operations. Committee staff made that possible by listening to our comments and including us in every step of the process.

Our detailed notes on each bill are contained herein. We are available to comment further on either bill should you require additional notes from NTTA. You may contact me at 214-224-2287 or via email at aballesteros@ntta.org.

H.B. 803

- NTTA has maintained its financial Transparency Star from the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts for several years, publishing a variety of documents – from our certified annual financial report to our check register – on the agency's website
- Although NTTA already publishes the data required to be posted by H.B. 803, the bill specifies posting of the data in a single frame on a tolling agency's website.
- NTTA's home page contains a direct link to our financial dashboard, shown [here](#).
- During discussions on the bill, NTTA insisted on a publish-by date of no later than June 30 annually; this allows public agencies like NTTA to complete auditing services by an outside, independent auditor.

- NTTA supports continued and enhanced transparency in toll operations, public and private, so customers can be sure their toll dollars are used for their intended purpose.
- NTTA began complying with H.B. 803 prior to the bill's effective date

S.B. 198

- The bill author filed a similar bill in the 85th Legislative Session; NTTA provided comments and was ready to testify in support of the bill.
- The refiled version, S.B. 198, reflects modifications suggested by a coalition of tolling agencies and regional mobility authorities that supported S.B. 198.
- Most notable, the bill requires tolling agencies to verify if a transaction can be attributed to transponder account in good standing before sending an invoice to a customer; this addresses a common problem in service areas where multiple agencies are processing transactions and issuing invoices for tolls.
- S.B. 198 goes further by codifying compliance with a transponder user agreement: "Customers must install and use transponders according to the terms of user agreements to avoid missed transactions and other billing issues that are caused by a transponder not properly installed in a vehicle."
- NTTA complies with the terms of S.B. 198; the bill clarifies tolling agency and customer responsibilities to make sure billing errors occur less frequently.
- NTTA supports legislation that allows tolling agencies to collect tolls as required by statutes and contracts while creating a more precise, streamlined process to avoid customer confusion.