



# AGC of TEXAS



**Highway, Heavy, Utilities & Industrial Branch**

JENNIFER WOODARD, Executive Vice President

September 18, 2020

The Honorable Terry Canales  
Chairman  
Texas House Committee on Transportation

Dear Chairman Canales:

On behalf of the Associated General Contractors of Texas – Highway, Heavy, Utilities, and Industrial Branch (AGC of Texas) thank you for leadership on the House Transportation Committee. AGC of Texas is an organization comprised of over 800 member companies across the state and one of the more than 32,000 networking firms comprising the Associated General Contractors of America. AGC of Texas member companies specialize in the construction and maintenance of state, city, and county roads as well as civil projects such as airports, bridges, dams, and municipal utilities. Your leadership on key issues before the Transportation Committee are of significant importance to this industry, the state and the economy.

Key decisions made by the Legislature and voters of Texas, such as the approval of Proposition 1 in 2014, Proposition 7 in 2015, and the Legislature's commitment to not diverting transportation dedicated funds for other purposes, have helped improve the quality of Texas' civil and transportation infrastructure as well as support the state's economy and create jobs. Innovation in transportation planning and technology necessitate the need for further discussion on infrastructure funding and how to prepare our state for the future. We are very grateful for the opportunity to provide input on these important issues through our written submission on your committee's interim charges.

Thank you and your colleagues for all that you do to improve the lives of Texans and the vitality of businesses in this state. Please do not hesitate to reach to out to AGC if we can ever serve as a resource to you or your committee.

Respectfully,

Robert Adamson  
President  
Associated General Contractors of Texas

*Study the state's transportation and road safety efforts in support of the Texas Transportation Commission's goal of ending traffic deaths in the state by 2050. Identify the most dangerous roads and transportation corridors in the state and determine opportunities to reduce high rates of traffic accidents and fatalities in these areas. Make recommendations to improve policies, funding strategies, program development, and agency coordination to ensure continuous improvements to road safety.*

Road safety is one of the most important challenges facing the highway construction industry in Texas. Every joint AGC of Texas and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) meeting begins with a safety message to ensure safety is at the forefront of consideration for everything the construction industry and its partners do. Work zone safety is of particular importance to the AGC of Texas. On average, there are over 3,000 active construction work zones on any given day in Texas. In 2019 more than 26,000 crashes occurred in Texas' work zones, resulting in 167 fatalities and 690 serious injuries.

The AGC of Texas is grateful to the legislature for enacting HB 61 (86R) which includes construction workers in the state's "Move Over Slow Down" law. This measure will undoubtedly save countless lives. However more can be done to protect the traveling public in Texas. November 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on roadways in Texas. That means for 19 years straight, at least one person has died every single day on Texas roads.

In recent years the legislature and TxDOT have engaged in many proactive and successful practices such as prohibiting texting while driving and distracted driver awareness campaigns. TxDOT has embraced internal policies that ensure safe driving practices by its employees and has encouraged the public to do the same. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute has published numerous studies on how to make Texas roads safer. Construction industry partners have engaged in national work zone safety awareness week. In 2019 the Texas Transportation Commission set aside over \$600 million in transportation funds for safety projects. These funds will be used on important safety initiatives such as installation of guardrails, widening of lanes, additional passing lanes on rural roadways, installation of rumble strips, construction of acceleration, deceleration and dedicated turn lanes, as well as new technology to enhance road and driver safety. Additionally, TxDOT's "End the Streak" campaign aims to raise awareness about safety on our roadways.

Through continued coordination between TxDOT, DPS, and other safety professionals, Texas can be a leader in transportation safety. Continued investment in road safety improvement projects by the legislature and the Texas Transportation Commission should be encouraged, and TxDOT should be applauded for putting these funds to good use.