87R10750 JTS-F

By:  Morales Shaw H.B. No. 4520

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to equitable representation in decision making for transportation planning.

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

SECTION 1.  Sections 201.051(b) and (i), Transportation Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b)  The members shall be appointed to reflect the diverse geographic regions and population groups of this state.  One member must reside in a rural area and be a registered voter of a county with a population of less than 150,000. One member must have experience as a frequent transit user, bicycle or pedestrian commuter, or as a person with a disability that has affected their use of the transportation system.

(i)  Appointments to the commission shall [~~be made without regard to race, color, disability, sex, religion, age, or national origin of the appointees and shall~~] reflect the diversity of the population of the state as a whole.

SECTION 2.  Subchapter H, Chapter 201, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 201.6016 to read as follows:

Sec. 201.6016.  EQUITABLE DECISION MAKING POLICY. The department shall develop and implement a policy for equitable decision making in the transportation planning process. The policy must:

(1)  analyze race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and geographic representation in positions and on boards, commissions, and committees responsible for transportation planning-related decisions, including:

(A)  metropolitan planning organization committees;

(B)  department executive leadership;

(C)  the commission; and

(D)  governing bodies of:

(i)  regional mobility authorities, county toll road authorities, and regional tollway authorities;

(ii)  transit authorities; and

(iii)  port authorities;

(2)  analyze public participation in the department's planning processes to ensure people of all races, ethnicities, genders, abilities, socio-economic status, languages, and geographic locations are successfully participating in those processes; and

(3)  establish guidelines for the entities under Subdivision (1) to achieve equitable representation, including at least the following:

(A)  proposing new joint powers agreements and bylaws to remedy problems;

(B)  guidance on improving public processes;

(C)  guidance for adopting proportional voting systems based upon residential populations of member governments to provide equal representation for all residents in decisions of entities such as metropolitan planning organizations; and

(D)  guidance for entities to include people with disabilities at all levels of decision making.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.