

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1885
By: Canales
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, the Texas Transportation Commission lacks the authority to establish variable speed limits, which are used to lower speed limits in response to conditions like adverse weather, congestion, work zones, and traffic incidents. Lowering speed limits in these situations may improve traffic safety and decrease road deaths. H.B. 1885 seeks to provide the Texas Transportation Commission the authority to establish variable speed limits to allow the temporary lowering of a prima facie speed limit to address inclement weather, congestion, road construction, or any other condition that affects the safe and orderly movement of traffic.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Transportation Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1885 amends the Transportation Code to authorize the Texas Transportation Commission by rule to establish a variable speed limit program to allow the temporary lowering of a prima facie speed limit to address inclement weather, congestion, road construction, or any other condition that affects the safe and orderly movement of traffic on a roadway for which the commission has authority to establish a speed limit. Notice of a speed limit established under the program may be displayed using a stationary or portable changeable message sign. The bill requires such an established speed limit to be based on an engineering and traffic investigation, provides for it to be effective for all or a designated portion of the highway and for any period of the day or night, prescribes posting and signage requirements for it to be effective, and prohibits it from being less than 10 miles per hour below the prima facie speed limit on the portion of the highway to which it applies.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.