

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2200
By: Hancock
Transportation
6/13/2023
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In Texas, safety service patrols (SSPs) may be referred to as courtesy patrols, roadside assistance programs, roadside safety patrols, highway emergency response operators, Tow and GO, or motorist assistance programs, and are operated by contractors, law enforcement, private companies, and tollway authorities. SSPs on highways and arterial roadways provide a free-of-charge traffic management service to support transportation departments in clearing minor crashes from area roadways and assist motorists in need. Specific services offered by SSP providers vary from program to program but share the same goal of ensuring the safety of the traveling public by minimizing the effect that incidents and stalled vehicles have on the operation of the transportation network.

SSP programs currently operate in 6 of 25 Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) districts (Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and El Paso), and are funded in various manners. Programs are run by partner agencies or by contractors and funded through interlocal agreements with metropolitan planning organizations, using Category 7 (metro mobility and rehabilitation) funds, and/or surface transportation block grant funds or surface transportation funds.

Although authorized by federal law, Texas state law does not currently permit TxDOT to use sponsorships for SSP programs.

S.B. 2200 amends the Transportation Code to allow for sponsorships for SSP programs which would explicitly allow companies to give TxDOT money to run these programs in exchange for displaying the sponsor's logo on the roadside assistance vehicles. This will help offset current costs and/or allow for the expansion of the current TxDOT SSP programs.

S.B. 2200 amends current law relating to public acknowledgment of donations made to the Texas Department of Transportation.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Transportation Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 201.206, Transportation Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 201.206, Transportation Code, as follows:

Sec. 201.206. DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text.

(b) Authorizes the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to enter into an agreement with a donor to publicly acknowledge donations made to TxDOT. Prohibits a public acknowledgment from containing comparative or qualitative descriptions of the donor's products, services, facilities, or companies.

(c) Authorizes TxDOT, if a person makes a donation to TxDOT's roadside assistance and safety service patrol program, to post an acknowledgment of the donation on a vehicle or equipment TxDOT uses for the program.

(d) Authorizes the Texas Transportation Commission to adopt rules for the acknowledgment of donations under this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.