

By: Harrison

H.B. No. 2991

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to toll collection and enforcement by toll project
3 entities; authorizing an administrative fee; imposing a civil
4 penalty.

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

6 ARTICLE 1. PAYMENT OF TOLLS

7 SECTION 1.01. Chapter 372, Transportation Code, is amended
8 by adding Subchapter B-1 to read as follows:

9 SUBCHAPTER B-1. TOLL COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

10 Sec. 372.071. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "registered
11 owner" means an owner as defined by Section 502.001.

12 Sec. 372.072. TOLL PAYMENT REQUIRED; EMERGENCY VEHICLES
13 EXEMPT. (a) The operator of a vehicle, other than an authorized
14 emergency vehicle as defined by Section 541.201, that is driven or
15 towed through a toll collection facility of a toll project shall pay
16 the proper toll. The exemption from payment of a toll for an
17 authorized emergency vehicle applies regardless of whether the
18 vehicle is:

- 19 (1) responding to an emergency;
20 (2) displaying a flashing light; or
21 (3) marked as an emergency vehicle.

22 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a toll project entity
23 may waive the requirement of the payment of a toll or may authorize
24 the payment of a reduced toll for any vehicle or class of vehicles.

1 Sec. 372.073. TOLL NOT PAID AT TIME OF USE; INVOICE. (a) As
2 an alternative to requiring payment of a toll at the time a vehicle
3 is driven or towed through a toll collection facility, a toll
4 project entity shall use video billing or other tolling methods to
5 permit the registered owner of the vehicle to pay the toll at a
6 later date.

7 (b) A toll project entity may use automated enforcement
8 technology, including video recordings, photography, electronic
9 data, and transponders, or other tolling methods to identify the
10 registered owner of the vehicle for purposes of billing,
11 collection, and enforcement activities.

12 (c) A toll project entity shall send by first class mail to
13 the registered owner of a vehicle a written invoice containing an
14 assessment for tolls incurred by the vehicle.

15 (d) A toll project entity shall send the invoice required
16 under Subsection (c) and related communications to:

17 (1) the registered owner's address as shown in the
18 vehicle registration records of the Texas Department of Motor
19 Vehicles or the analogous department or agency of another state or
20 country; or

21 (2) an alternate address provided by the owner or
22 derived through other reliable means.

23 (e) A toll project entity may provide that the invoice
24 required under Subsection (c), instead of being sent by first class
25 mail, be sent as an electronic record to a registered owner that
26 agrees to the terms of the electronic record transmission of the
27 information.

1 (f) A toll project entity that sends an initial invoice
2 required under Subsection (c) may not assess an additional fee
3 other than a postage fee to the amount owed by the owner of the
4 vehicle.

5 Sec. 372.074. INVOICE REQUIREMENTS; PAYMENT DUE DATE. An
6 invoice containing an assessment for the use of a toll project must:

7 (1) require payment not later than the 30th day after
8 the date the invoice is mailed; and

9 (2) conspicuously state:

10 (A) the amount due;

11 (B) the date by which the amount due must be paid;

12 (C) that failure to pay the amount due in the
13 required period will result in the assessment of an administrative
14 fee; and

15 (D) that failure to pay two or more invoices will
16 result in a civil penalty.

17 Sec. 372.075. PAYMENT OF TOLL INVOICE; ADMINISTRATIVE FEE.

18 (a) A person who receives an invoice under this subchapter for the
19 use of a toll project shall, not later than the due date specified
20 in the invoice:

21 (1) pay the amount owed as stated in the invoice; or

22 (2) send a written request to the toll project entity
23 for a review of the toll assessments contained in the invoice.

24 (b) If a person fails to comply with Subsection (a), a toll
25 project entity may add an administrative fee, not to exceed \$6, to
26 the amount the person owes. The toll project entity:

27 (1) must set the administrative fee by rule in an

1 amount that does not exceed the cost of collecting the toll; and

2 (2) may not charge a person more than \$48 in
3 administrative fees in a 12-month period.

4 (c) A toll project entity other than a county under Chapter
5 284 may contract, in accordance with Section 2107.003, Government
6 Code, with a person to collect unpaid tolls and any applicable
7 administrative fees from a person who has failed to pay at least six
8 consecutive months of unpaid tolls before referring the matter to a
9 court with jurisdiction over a civil penalty under Section 372.078.

10 (d) A toll project entity may not collect unpaid tolls and
11 administrative fees through an administrative adjudication hearing
12 conducted by the toll project entity or a person who contracts with
13 the toll project entity to conduct hearings.

14 Sec. 372.076. PAYMENT PLAN. In the second invoice for
15 unpaid tolls sent to a person by a toll project entity, the toll
16 project entity shall provide to the person the option to pay the
17 tolls through a payment plan.

18 Sec. 372.077. NOTICE OF RETURNED PAYMENT. A toll project
19 entity must immediately notify the holder of an electronic toll
20 collection customer account that a payment by the credit card or
21 debit card associated with the account was declined or could not
22 otherwise be processed.

23 Sec. 372.078. CIVIL PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO PAY TWO OR MORE
24 INVOICES. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (c), a person who
25 receives two or more invoices for unpaid tolls and who has not paid
26 the amounts due on or before the due dates specified in the invoices
27 is subject to a civil penalty of \$25. Only one civil penalty may be

1 assessed in a six-month period. An appropriate district or county
2 attorney may sue to collect the civil penalty and the underlying
3 toll and administrative fee.

4 (b) In determining liability for a civil penalty under this
5 section, it is presumed that the unpaid invoices were received on
6 the fifth day after the date of mailing.

7 (c) A person who enters into a payment plan under Section
8 372.076 is subject to a civil penalty under Subsection (a) only if
9 the person fails to make a payment required by the payment plan.

10 (d) It is a defense to liability for a civil penalty under
11 this section that the person:

12 (1) is not liable for payment of each toll assessed in
13 the unpaid invoices; or

14 (2) paid the amount owed in the invoices pertaining to
15 each toll assessed in the invoices for which the person is liable.

16 (e) The court in which a person is found liable for a civil
17 penalty under Subsection (a) shall collect the civil penalty,
18 unpaid tolls, administrative fees, and any additional court costs
19 and forward the amounts to the appropriate toll project entity.

20 Sec. 372.079. EXCEPTIONS TO TOLL LIABILITY: LEASED,
21 TRANSFERRED, OR STOLEN VEHICLE. (a) It is an exception to
22 liability of a vehicle's registered owner for a toll incurred by the
23 vehicle if the registered owner of the vehicle is a lessor of the
24 vehicle and not later than the 30th day after the date the invoice
25 containing an assessment of the toll is mailed provides to the
26 appropriate toll project entity:

27 (1) a copy of the rental, lease, or other contract

1 document covering the vehicle on the date the toll was incurred,
2 with the name and address of the lessee clearly legible; or

3 (2) electronic data, in a format agreed on by the toll
4 project entity and the lessor, other than a photocopy or scan of a
5 rental or lease contract, that contains the information required
6 under Sections 521.460(c)(1), (2), and (3) covering the vehicle on
7 the date the toll was incurred.

8 (b) If the lessor provides the required information within
9 the period prescribed under Subsection (a), the toll project entity
10 may send an invoice to the lessee at the address provided under
11 Subsection (a) by first class mail not later than the 30th day after
12 the date of receipt of the required information from the lessor.

13 (c) It is an exception to liability of a vehicle's
14 registered owner for a toll incurred by the vehicle if the
15 registered owner of the vehicle:

16 (1) transferred ownership of the vehicle to another
17 person before the toll was incurred;

18 (2) submitted written notice of the transfer to the
19 Texas Department of Motor Vehicles in accordance with Section
20 501.147; and

21 (3) not later than the 30th day after the date the
22 invoice is mailed, provides to the appropriate toll project entity
23 the name and address of the person to whom the vehicle was
24 transferred.

25 (d) If the former owner of the vehicle provides the required
26 information within the period prescribed under Subsection (c), the
27 toll project entity may send an invoice to the person to whom

1 ownership of the vehicle was transferred at the address provided by
2 the former owner by first class mail not later than the 30th day
3 after the date of receipt of the required information from the
4 former owner.

5 (e) It is an exception to liability of a vehicle's
6 registered owner for a toll incurred by the vehicle if:

7 (1) the vehicle in question was stolen before the toll
8 was incurred and was not recovered by the time the toll was
9 incurred; and

10 (2) the theft was reported to the appropriate law
11 enforcement authority before the earlier of:

12 (A) the time the toll was incurred; or

13 (B) eight hours after the discovery of the theft.

14 Sec. 372.080. PRESUMPTION. Proof that a vehicle passed
15 through a toll collection facility without payment of the proper
16 toll, together with proof that the invoice recipient was the
17 registered owner or the driver of the vehicle when the toll was
18 incurred, creates a presumption that the invoice recipient is
19 liable for the toll incurred by the vehicle. The proof may be by a
20 written statement of a peace officer or toll project entity
21 employee, video surveillance, or any other reasonable evidence,
22 including:

23 (1) evidence obtained by automated enforcement
24 technology that the toll project entity determines is necessary,
25 including automated enforcement technology described by Section
26 372.073(b); or

27 (2) a copy of the rental, lease, or other contract

1 document or the electronic data provided to the toll project entity
2 under Section 372.079(a) that shows that the invoice recipient was
3 the lessee of the vehicle when the toll was incurred.

4 Sec. 372.081. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION RELATED TO
5 TOLL COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT. Information collected for the
6 purposes of this subchapter, including contact, payment, and other
7 account information and trip data, is confidential and not subject
8 to disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code.

9 SECTION 1.02. Section 372.058, Transportation Code, is
10 transferred to Subchapter B-1, Chapter 372, Transportation Code, as
11 added by this Act, redesignated as Section 372.082, Transportation
12 Code, and amended to read as follows:

13 Sec. 372.082 [~~372.058~~]. INFORMATION SHARING AND CONTRACTS
14 BETWEEN TOLL PROJECT ENTITIES. (a) Notwithstanding the
15 confidentiality of electronic toll collection customer account
16 information, including confidentiality under Sections 228.057(e),
17 366.179(d), [~~370.177(m)~~] 370.178(d), [~~and~~] 372.051(a), and
18 372.081, a toll project entity with an electronic toll collection
19 customer may provide to another toll project entity electronic toll
20 collection customer account information for the purposes of
21 customer service, toll collection, enforcement, or reporting
22 requirements.

23 (b) The provision of electronic toll collection customer
24 account information under Subsection (a) must ensure the
25 confidentiality of all account information.

26 (c) A contract between toll project entities for the
27 collection of tolls must[+]

1 ~~[(1) specify which entity is responsible for making~~
2 ~~the determinations, sending notices, and taking other actions, as~~
3 ~~applicable, under Section 372.055, and~~

4 ~~[(2)]~~ include terms to ensure that customers do not
5 receive invoices from more than one entity for the same
6 transaction.

7 ARTICLE 2. CONFORMING CHANGES

8 SECTION 2.01. Section 228.059, Transportation Code, is
9 amended to read as follows:

10 Sec. 228.059. TOLL COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT BY OTHER
11 ENTITY. (a) An entity operating a toll lane pursuant to Section
12 228.007(b) or under an agreement under Subchapter E, Chapter 223,
13 has, with regard to toll collection and enforcement for that toll
14 lane, the same powers and duties as the department under this
15 chapter and Subchapter B-1, Chapter 372, except as provided by
16 Subsection (b). The entity may use revenues for improvement,
17 extension, expansion, or maintenance of the toll lane.

18 (b) Notwithstanding any ~~[Sections 228.0545, 228.0546, and~~
19 ~~228.0547 or]~~ other law, a toll collected pursuant to an agreement
20 for tolling services with a toll project entity, as defined by
21 Section 371.001, other than the department is governed by the fee
22 and fine structure of the entity issuing the initial toll invoice.

23 SECTION 2.02. The heading to Subchapter D, Chapter 284,
24 Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

25 SUBCHAPTER D. MISCELLANEOUS TOLL COLLECTION PROVISIONS

26 ~~[UNAUTHORIZED USE OF TOLL ROADS IN CERTAIN COUNTIES]~~

27 SECTION 2.03. The heading to Section 284.2031,

1 Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

2 Sec. 284.2031. CIVIL [~~AND CRIMINAL~~] ENFORCEMENT: FINE.

3 SECTION 2.04. Section 284.2031(a), Transportation Code, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 (a) A county may impose, in addition to other costs, a fine
6 of \$1 on the imposition of a civil penalty [~~conviction to a~~
7 ~~defendant convicted of an offense~~] under Section 372.078 [~~284.070,~~
8 ~~284.0701, or 284.203~~] in an action brought by the county or district
9 attorney.

10 SECTION 2.05. Section 366.038(h), Transportation Code, is
11 amended to read as follows:

12 (h) For purposes of Subchapter C, Chapter 372, a toll
13 project for which an authority provides tolling services under a
14 tolling services agreement is considered a toll project of the
15 authority and the authority is considered the toll project entity
16 with respect to all rights and remedies arising under that
17 subchapter regarding the toll project. The authority may not stop
18 [~~, detain, or impound~~] a motor vehicle as authorized under that
19 subchapter on a toll project's active traffic lanes unless a
20 tolling service agreement addresses that action.

21 SECTION 2.06. Subchapter E, Chapter 366, Transportation
22 Code, is amended by adding Section 366.186 to read as follows:

23 Sec. 366.186. OTHER POWERS AND DUTIES RELATED TO TOLL
24 COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT. In addition to the other powers and
25 duties provided by this chapter and Chapter 372, an authority has
26 the same powers and duties as the department under Chapter 228, a
27 county under Chapter 284, and a regional mobility authority under

1 Chapter 370 regarding the authority's toll collection and
2 enforcement powers for:

- 3 (1) the authority's turnpike projects; and
4 (2) other toll projects developed, financed,
5 constructed, or operated under an agreement, including a
6 comprehensive development agreement, with the authority.

7 SECTION 2.07. Subchapter E, Chapter 370, Transportation
8 Code, is amended by adding Section 370.194 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 370.194. OTHER POWERS AND DUTIES RELATED TO TOLL
10 COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT. In addition to the other powers and
11 duties provided by this chapter and Chapter 372, an authority has
12 the same powers and duties as the department under Chapter 228, a
13 county under Chapter 284, and a regional tollway authority under
14 Chapter 366 regarding the authority's toll collection and
15 enforcement powers for:

- 16 (1) the authority's turnpike projects; and
17 (2) other toll projects developed, financed,
18 constructed, or operated under an agreement with the authority or
19 another entity.

20 SECTION 2.08. The heading to Subchapter C, Chapter 372,
21 Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

22 SUBCHAPTER C. ADDITIONAL REMEDIES AND PROCEDURES FOR NONPAYMENT OF
23 TOLLS: CERTAIN TOLL PROJECT ENTITIES [~~, REMEDIES~~]

24 SECTION 2.09. The heading to Section 372.105,
25 Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

26 Sec. 372.105. INVOICES PROVIDED IN PERSON FOR USE OF TOLL
27 PROJECT [~~NONPAYMENT~~] BY VEHICLES NOT REGISTERED IN THIS STATE.

1 SECTION 2.10. Sections 372.105(a) and (b), Transportation
2 Code, are amended to read as follows:

3 (a) A toll project entity may, in lieu of mailing an invoice
4 ~~[a written notice of nonpayment]~~, serve with an invoice ~~[a written~~
5 ~~notice of nonpayment]~~ in person an owner of a vehicle that is not
6 registered in this state, including the owner of a vehicle
7 registered in another state of the United States, the United
8 Mexican States, a state of the United Mexican States, or another
9 country or territory. An invoice ~~[A notice of nonpayment]~~ may also
10 be served by an employee of a governmental entity operating an
11 international bridge at the time a vehicle with a record of
12 nonpayment seeks to enter or leave this state.

13 (b) An invoice ~~[Each written notice of nonpayment]~~ issued
14 under Subsection (a) must be paid not later than the due date
15 specified in the invoice ~~[shall include a warning that the failure~~
16 ~~to pay the amounts in the notice may result in the toll project~~
17 ~~entity's exercise of the habitual violator remedies under this~~
18 ~~subchapter]~~.

19 SECTION 2.11. Section 541.201(13-a), Transportation Code,
20 is amended to read as follows:

21 (13-a) "Police vehicle" means a vehicle used by a
22 peace officer, as defined by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal
23 Procedure, for law enforcement purposes that:

- 24 (A) is owned or leased by a governmental entity;
- 25 (B) is owned or leased by the police department
26 of a private institution of higher education that commissions peace
27 officers under Section 51.212, Education Code; or

- 1 (C) is:
- 2 (i) a private vehicle owned or leased by the
- 3 peace officer; and
- 4 (ii) approved for use for law enforcement
- 5 purposes by the head of the law enforcement agency that employs the
- 6 peace officer, or by that person's designee, provided that use of
- 7 the private vehicle must, if applicable, comply with any rule
- 8 adopted by the commissioners court of a county under Section
- 9 [170.001](#), Local Government Code, and that the private vehicle may
- 10 not be considered an authorized emergency vehicle for exemption
- 11 purposes under Section [372.072](#) [~~[228.054](#), [284.070](#), [366.178](#), or~~
- 12 ~~[370.177](#)~~], Transportation Code, unless the vehicle is marked.

13 ARTICLE 3. REPEALERS

14 SECTION 3.01. The following provisions of the

15 Transportation Code are repealed:

- 16 (1) Section [228.001](#)(3-a);
- 17 (2) Sections [228.054](#), [228.0545](#), [228.0546](#), [228.0547](#),
- 18 [228.055](#), and [228.056](#);
- 19 (3) Sections [284.070](#), [284.0701](#), [284.0702](#), [284.202](#),
- 20 [284.203](#), [284.2032](#), [284.204](#), [284.205](#), [284.206](#), [284.207](#), [284.208](#),
- 21 [284.209](#), [284.210](#), [284.211](#), and [284.212](#);
- 22 (4) Section [284.2031](#)(b);
- 23 (5) Section [366.178](#);
- 24 (6) Section [370.177](#);
- 25 (7) Section [372.054](#);
- 26 (8) Sections [372.055](#), [372.056](#), [372.057](#), [372.102](#),
- 27 [372.106](#), [372.107](#), [372.108](#), [372.109](#), [372.110](#), [372.111](#), [372.112](#),

1 372.113, 372.114, and 372.115;

2 (9) Sections 372.105(c), (d), (e), and (f); and

3 (10) Section 502.011.

4 ARTICLE 4. TRANSITION; EFFECTIVE DATE

5 SECTION 4.01. The changes in law made by this Act apply only
6 to a toll incurred on or after the effective date of this Act. A
7 toll incurred before the effective date of this Act is governed by
8 the law in effect on the date the toll was incurred, and the former
9 law is continued in effect for that purpose.

10 SECTION 4.02. This Act takes effect immediately if it
11 receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each
12 house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution.
13 If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate
14 effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2023.