

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R8817 CXP-F

S.B. 1121
By: Nichols
Transportation
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 1121 removes unnecessary red tape hindering the deployment of broadband. This bill would add buried fiber broadband projects located in the right-of-way of a road to an existing list of infrastructure projects exempt from conducting an archeological study. These broadband projects are going in areas where the land has already been disturbed by road construction and have little, if any, chance to damage archeological sites. However, broadband providers have been required to conduct archeological studies in these areas which can delay the project for months at a time and cost thousands of dollars. That time and those funds would be better spent deploying broadband to communities more quickly and efficiently. If something of historical value is found, providers are still required to notify the Historical Commission and cease work on the project immediately until the commission determines whether more action is necessary.

As proposed, S.B. 1121 amends current law relating to excepting certain fiber-optic cable projects from certain notice requirements for projects on state or local public land.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 191.0525(e), Natural Resources Code, as follows:

(e) Includes the installation, maintenance, operation, replacement, or minor modification of buried fiber-optic cables located in the right-of-way of an existing road among the activities conducted on nonfederal public land that have little, if any, chance to damage archeological sites which are categorically excluded from certain notification requirements. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.