

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.S.B. 1555
By: Nichols; Alvarado
Transportation
3/6/2025
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

During the 88th legislative interim, the Senate Committee on Transportation was tasked to assess the implementation of funding appropriated by the 88th Legislature. The areas to which funding will be appropriated to are aviation, maritime ports, international points of entry, existing rail line operations, and public transportation from nondedicated state funds and federal funds. The committee will also make recommendations to ensure these sectors meet current demands and are prepared for future growth.

During that hearing, it was determined that the committee should further investigate rail grade separations. Rail grade separations at highway rail crossings improves safety, emergency response times, economic productivity, congestion mitigation, evacuation routing, and supply chain fluidity for critical locations in Texas.

S.B. 1555 creates a grant program for railroad grade separation projects. This bill requires Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to award grants to political subdivisions for rail-roadway grade separation projects that are located at intersections of railroads and roadways that are not part of the state highway system or county and city projects. This bill also requires a ten percent match from local jurisdiction for the grant.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 1555 amends current law relating to a grant program to fund certain railroad grade separation projects.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Transportation Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 471.010, Transportation Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 471, Transportation Code, by adding Section 471.010, as follows:

Sec. 471.010. GRANT PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN RAILROAD GRADE SEPARATION PROJECTS. (a) Requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), for the purpose of increasing public safety, enhancing economic development, and reducing traffic, to establish and administer a program to award grants to political subdivisions of this state to fund rail-roadway grade separation projects that are located at intersections of railroads and public roadways that are not part of the state highway system and rail-pedestrian grade separation projects that are located at intersections of railroads and public pedestrian crossings.

(b) Requires that each grant awarded under this section be approved by the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC). Prohibits TTC from approving a grant under this section unless TTC determines that at least 10 percent of the total project costs will be provided by a source other than the state.

(c) Authorizes TxDOT to fund the grant program under this section only from money appropriated by the legislature for that purpose and from gifts and grants, including grants from the federal government. Authorizes TxDOT to solicit and accept gifts and grants from any source for the purposes of this section. Prohibits money deposited to the credit of the state highway fund from being used to fund a grant awarded under this section.

(d) Requires a political subdivision that receives a grant under this section to designate TxDOT to manage contracting for, in accordance with Subchapter A (Competitive Bids), Chapter 223 (Bids and Contracts For Highway Projects), and supervision of the planning and construction of a project for which the grant was awarded. Requires a political subdivision to enter into an agreement with TxDOT prescribing the terms of a designation under this subsection in accordance with applicable state or federal law. Requires TxDOT, acting as the designee of a political subdivision under this section, to make each contract in accordance with the law governing the making of contracts by or on behalf of the state.

(e) Requires TTC to adopt rules as necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 2. Requires TTC, not later than October 1, 2025, to adopt the rules required by Section 471.010, Transportation Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.