

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 344
By: Solomons (Carona)
State Affairs
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Engrossed

DIGEST

Currently, Texas law provides antique car owners two options for license plates: using specialized license plates or license plates issued in the year in which a car was manufactured. However, some owners of antique autos may find it difficult to obtain license plates for vehicles more than 25 years old. This bill requires the Texas Department of Transportation to approve the use of interchangeable antique license plates for certain antique vehicles.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 344 requires the Texas Department of Transportation to approve the use of interchangeable antique license plates for certain antique vehicles.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 502.274(a), Transportation Code, to require the Texas Department of Transportation (department) to issue specially designed license plates for passenger cars, motorcycles, and light trucks that are at least 25 years old. Requires the license plates to include certain words, including "classic motorcycle," as appropriate.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 502.275, Transportation Code, as follows:

Sec. 502.275. New heading: CERTAIN EXHIBITION VEHICLES; OFFENSE. (a) Requires the department to issue specially designed license plates for a passenger car, truck, motorcycle, or former military vehicle that meets certain requirements including a vehicle that is at least 25 years old, if the vehicle is a passenger car, truck, or motorcycle.

(b) Requires special license plates issued under Subsection (a), rather than this section, to include certain words, including the words "military vehicle."

(c) Requires the department to approve for use on a passenger car license plates that were issued for a passenger car or for a truck and to approve for use on a truck license plates that were issued for a truck or passenger car.

(d) Provides that license plates issued under Subsection (a) or approved under Subsection (c) are valid for a maximum period of five years.

(e) Requires the department to issue license plates under Subsection (a) or approve the license plates under Subsection (c), and to issue a registration receipt to certain persons including persons who file a sworn written application that contains certain information, including the make, body style, motor number, and age of the vehicle if the vehicle is a passenger car, truck, or motorcycle or states any other information required by the department.

(f) Authorizes the department to exempt a former military vehicle from the requirement

to display license plates or any symbol, tab, or other device indicating registration of the vehicle if the department determines that the exemption is necessary to maintain the vehicle's accurate military design or markings, notwithstanding any other provision of this section.

(g)-(k) Makes conforming changes.

(l) Provides that a vehicle issued plates under Subsection (a) is required to display only one license plate, which is to be attached to the rear of the vehicle, notwithstanding any other section of this code.

(m) Defines "former military vehicle."

SECTION 3. Amends Chapter 502F, Transportation Code, by adding Section 502.293, as follows:

Sec. 502.293. COUNTY JUDGES. Requires the department to design and provide for the issuance of special license plates for passenger cars and light trucks that are owned by persons who are county judges of this state. Requires license plates issued to county judges to bear the words "county judge." Requires the department to issue license plates under this chapter to certain persons. Provides that the fee for registration under this section and issuance of the special license plates is the fee otherwise prescribed by this chapter for the vehicle. Provides that registration under this section is valid for one year and expires in the same manner as do regular motor vehicle registrations, except as provided by Subsection (f). Provides that registration under this section expires when the owner of the vehicle for which the special plates were issued ceases to be a county judge. Requires the judge to return the special license plates to the department. Requires the owner of a vehicle to return the special plates to the department and at that time to apply for issuance of those plates to another vehicle, if the owner of a vehicle for which plates are issued under this section disposes of the vehicle during a registration year. Authorizes the owner of the vehicle for which plates under this section are lost, stolen, or mutilated to obtain replacement plates from the department by paying a replacement fee of \$5. Defines "county judge."

SECTION 4. Amends Chapter 5A, Insurance Code by adding Article 5.01-3, as follows:

Art. 5.01-3. FORMER MILITARY VEHICLES. Requires a rating plan that includes a classification applicable to certain vehicles used for certain purposes to include in the classification former military vehicles maintained for those uses. Defines "former military vehicle."

SECTION 5. Provides that this Act conforms the Transportation Code to changes made in law by Section 1, Chapter 443, Acts of the 74th Legislature, Regular Session, 1995. Requires this Act to prevail over another Act if there are any conflicts.

SECTION 6. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 7. Emergency clause.

Effective date: upon passage.