

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1597
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Natural Resources
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Until recently, the United States (U.S.) has been the world's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide emission; Texas leads the nation with more than 10 percent of total U.S. emissions. Gas and diesel engines are a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, second only to energy generation nationally, creating the most prevalent U.S. greenhouse gas: carbon dioxide. In Texas, transportation emissions constitute 29 percent of emissions, falling in behind electricity generation at 34 percent and industrial uses at 33 percent. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required to develop long-range transportation plans (plan) for their urban region every four to five years. As the vision for a region's future transportation infrastructure, these plans provide a unique opportunity to analyze the potential greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles in the region.

As proposed, S.B. 1597 adds certain greenhouse gases to the list of pollutants to be analyzed and requires the analysis to quantify carbon dioxide using the best available methods as determined by the Texas Department of Transportation, in consultation with certain federal and state agencies. S.B. 1597 requires the result of the analysis to be presented to an MPO board and the public in advance of adopting a new long-range transportation plan. This requirement will apply only to those plans scheduled for adoption after January 1, 2011.

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 Subchapter D, Chapter 472, Transportation Code, by adding Section 472.035, as follows:

Sec. 472.035. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ANALYSIS OF LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN. (a) Requires a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), in analyzing vehicle emissions associated with transportation activities expected to result from implementation of a long-range transportation plan (plan) to be adopted by the MPO on or after January 1, 2011, to conduct an analysis of greenhouse gas emissions using the best available methods.

(1) Requires that the analysis quantify carbon dioxide emissions using methods determined to be the best available by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in consultation with the state's MPOs, the Federal Highway Administration, [the] Federal Transit Administration, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and the Texas Council on Environmental Quality.

(2) Authorizes the analysis to be quantitative or qualitative for other greenhouse gasses including methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.

(3) Provides that TxDOT, in consultation with the parties listed in subsection [sic] (1) will monitor and update the agreed upon best available methods as necessary.

(b) Requires that the results of an analysis under Subsection (a) be reported to the policy board and the public before any meeting at which the long-range plan or plan amendment involving one or more regionally significant projects will be considered for adoption.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.