

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1698
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Transportation
5/18/2021
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Traffic-related congestion and mobility are significant concerns in the Bryan-College Station region, where congestion has increased by an average of nearly five percent each year for the last decade. A recent survey of College Station residents indicates that managing traffic congestion should be a very high priority in terms of city services, but there still remains a significant gap between city service importance and quality of available services in the area. The message is clear; while local commitments to addressing transportation needs are significant, without taking additional actions congestion will continue to double about every 12 years.

H.B. 1698 seeks to remedy this situation by providing for the imposition of an additional vehicle registration fee to be used for funding long-term transportation projects. This fee must be approved by a majority of voters in the county at a referendum election.

H.B. 1698 amends current law relating to an optional county fee on vehicle registration in certain counties to be used for transportation projects.

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 502.402, Transportation Code, by amending Subsections (a), (b), (b-1), and (e) and adding Subsection (e-1), as follows:

(a) Provides that Section 502.402 (Optional County Fee for Transportation Projects) applies only to:

(1) and (2) makes nonsubstantive changes to these subdivisions;

(3) a county other than a county described by Subdivision (1) or (2) that is part of a regional mobility authority; and

(4) a county that has a population of more than 320,000, that does not border the United Mexican States, and in which a port authority is authorized to issue permits for oversize or overweight vehicles under Chapter 623 (Permits for Oversize or Overweight Vehicles).

(b) Requires that an additional vehicle registration fee, in a county described by Subsection (a)(3), be approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the county voting on the issue at a referendum election, which the commissioners court is authorized to order and hold for that purpose.

(b-1) Authorizes the commissioners court of a county described by Subsection (a), rather than a county described by Subsection (a) with a population of less than 700,000, to increase the additional fee to an amount that does not exceed \$20 if approved by a

majority of the qualified voters of the county voting on the issue at a referendum election, which the commissioners court is authorized to order and hold for that purpose.

(e) Requires that the fee revenue collected, except as otherwise provided by Subsection (e-1), be:

(1) creates this subdivision from existing text and makes a nonsubstantive change;
or

(2) if there is no regional mobility authority located in the county, used by the county only to fund long-term transportation projects in the county that are consistent with the purposes specified by Section 7-a, Article VIII, Texas Constitution.

(e-1) Provides that if a county described by Subsection (a)(1), other than a county in which a vehicle is required to pass an emissions inspection, has been authorized to increase the amount of the fee under Subsection (b-1), 50 percent of the additional revenue collected as authorized by that subsection is required to be sent to the county treasurer of the county to be credited to the county road and bridge fund.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.