

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1133
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DIGEST

Currently, Texas motorists who incur vehicle problems may be stranded if they do not have a cellular telephone available. Because of vast stretches of Texas highway, motorists may be faced with potential hazards such as having to cross dangerous intersections or walking great distances in inclement weather to use a telephone. This bill provides for the establishment of emergency call boxes on Texas highways that will provide stranded motorists 911 emergency service and tow truck assistance.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 1133 provides for the establishment of emergency call boxes on Texas highways that will provide stranded motorists 911 emergency service and tow truck assistance.

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 Title 6B, Transportation Code, by adding Chapter 226, as follows:

CHAPTER 226. EMERGENCY HIGHWAY CALL BOX SYSTEM

Sec. 226.001. DEFINITION. Defines "emergency response services."

Sec. 226.002. APPLICABILITY; LIMITATION ON EXPENDITURES. Provides that this chapter does not apply to a segment of a highway that the Texas Transportation Commission has designated as a farm-to-market or ranch-to-market road. Provides that this chapter does not authorize the Texas Department of Transportation (department) to make an expenditure of money for the implementation, operation, or maintenance of the emergency telephone call box system under this chapter that exceeds the amount of money deposited to the credit of the state highway fund under Section 502.185(d).

Sec. 226.003. INSTALLATION, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF CALL BOX SYSTEM. Requires the department to provide for the installation, operation, and maintenance of a system of emergency telephone call boxes along those highways in this state that are part of the designated state highway system. Sets forth requirements of the system.

Sec. 226.004. DISTANCE BETWEEN CALL BOXES. Prohibits the distance between two call boxes from exceeding two miles, except as prohibited by roadway conditions, when the system is fully implemented.

Sec. 226.005. EMERGENCY TELEPHONE CALL BOX SYSTEM COMMITTEE. Requires an emergency telephone call box system committee (committee) to be created. Sets forth the composition of the committee. Requires the department to consult with the committee in determining the initial placement and spacing of the emergency telephone call boxes. Requires the committee to advise and assist the department in the design, operation, and maintenance of the system and the development of specifications for each contract to be

awarded under this chapter.

Sec. 226.006. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM ADVISORY COMMISSION ON STATE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS. Requires the Advisory Commission on State Emergency Communications (commission) to provide certain technical assistance to the department.

Sec. 226.007. CONTRACTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND INSTALLATION OF CALL BOX SYSTEM. Sets forth requirements of the department regarding the awarding of contracts, the installation of the call box system, and the implementation of the system. Authorizes the department to solicit proposals for and enter into one or more lease-purchase agreements under this chapter.

Sec. 226.008. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION. Requires the commission, agencies of this state, and each county and municipality in the state to cooperate with the department in the design, establishment, operation, and maintenance of the emergency telephone call box system.

Sec. 226.009. ANNUAL REPORTS. Requires the department to file an annual report with certain persons and entities by November 1 of each year. Authorizes the report to include the department's recommendations for action by the legislature.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 502D, Transportation Code, by adding Section 502.185, as follows:

Sec. 502.185. EMERGENCY TELEPHONE CALL BOX SYSTEM FEE. Requires a person to pay a fee of \$1, in addition to the registration fee, when a person registers a vehicle under this chapter, except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section. Provides that Subsection (a) does not apply to a vehicle that is owned by and used exclusively in the service of the United States, this state, or a political subdivision of this state. Requires the county assessor-collector to send each \$1 fee collected under this section to the department before the 30th day after the date it is collected. Requires each fee collected by the department to be deposited to the credit of a separate account in the state highway fund. Authorizes money in the account to be used only for the purpose of implementing or administering the emergency telephone call box system established by the department under Chapter 226, except as provided by Subsection (e). Authorizes the department to use surplus funds, if any exist, for any purpose for which the money in that fund may be spent. Prohibits Section 403.095, Government Code, from applying to money deposited in the state highway fund under this section.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 1997.
Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 4. Emergency clause.