

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 1830
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Transportation
4/19/2017
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current law sets guidelines to establish safe following distance behavior of a person operating a truck or motor vehicle when one vehicle is following another (Section 545.062, Transportation Code). The statute does not set specific distance requirements for drivers' following distance.

The law outlines that a driver must maintain a clear distance between vehicles for a stop without colliding and allow sufficient space for another vehicle to pass in front of or between cars in a caravan.

Connected braking technology is used between platoons of no more than two vehicles. The two vehicles are linked together wirelessly so the rear vehicle instantly knows the behavior of the front vehicle. It requires the rear driver to control the steering wheel at all times, but allows the rear vehicle to control its speed based on the behavior of the front vehicle, surrounding traffic, and weather conditions.

Connected braking technology is currently being deployed across the United States and Europe by major truck fleets. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Texas A&M Transportation Institute, the Federal Highway Administration, and private sector companies have been involved in various projects on connected braking technology, demonstrating how it increases safety for vehicles using the technology, as well as the surrounding vehicles.

While law enforcement is not ticketing the use of connected braking, current statute is not definitive on its allowance.

S.B. 1830 amends the Transportation Code, to define "connected braking" as a system by which the braking of one vehicle is electronically coordinated with the braking system of a following vehicle. S.B. 1830 clarifies that drivers may use connected braking systems to maintain a clear distance as required in statute. (Original Author's / Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 1830 amends current law relating to the use of connected braking systems to maintain distance between vehicles.

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 545.062, Transportation Code, by adding Subsection (d), as follows:

(d) Authorizes an operator of a vehicle equipped with a connected braking system that is following another vehicle equipped with that system to be assisted by the system to maintain an assured clear distance or sufficient space as required by this section. Defines "connected braking system."

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.