

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 4797  
By: Romero, Jr.  
Transportation  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

On the morning of February 11, 2021, a multi-vehicle crash involving 130 vehicles occurred on an elevated section of the southbound toll lanes of I-35W built, operated, and maintained by the North Tarrant Express Mobility Partners (NTEMP), which is owned by Cintra. As a result of this crash, six people were killed and another 36 were transported to hospitals with injuries. This catastrophic crash has commonly been referred to as the "Fort Worth pileup" or the "I-35W pileup." In the fallout of this tragic day, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) conducted a highway investigative report to determine the probable cause and provide safety recommendations. Through this report, NTSB determined NTEMP "failed to effectively monitor and address icy roadway conditions during a 2021 winter storm, contributing to a multi-vehicle crash." The report went on to state that the training NTEMP provided its employees "was insufficient to prepare them to monitor roadway conditions effectively during winter events." To address these issues, NTSB recommended that Texas provide a comprehensive winter weather training program for private and state-regulated toll facility employees. H.B. 4797 seeks to increase safety on tolled roadways during inclement weather by mandating that toll project entities require each employee or contractor who performs road treatment to complete a training course in the same manner as a Texas Department of Transportation employee who performs the same work.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Department of Transportation in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 4797 amends the Transportation Code to require a toll project entity that treats a roadway maintained by the entity during icy or snowy weather to require each employee or contractor who performs the treatment to complete a training course on treating roadways during such weather in the same manner as a Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) employee who treats roadways during such weather. The bill requires TxDOT to make training courses that it provides to its employees available to those toll project entity employees and contractors.

H.B. 4797 authorizes TxDOT to require that such an employee or contractor complete a training course provided by another entity that includes substantially the same information as a course provided by TxDOT. The bill authorizes TxDOT to adopt rules as necessary to implement the bill's provisions.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.