

SUBJECT: Reducing token trailer registration requirements

COMMITTEE: Transportation — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Phillips, Martinez, Burkett, Fletcher, Guerra, Lavender, McClendon, Pickett, Riddle

0 nays

2 absent — Y. Davis, Harper-Brown

WITNESSES: For — Les Findeisen, Texas Motor Transportation Association
(*Registered, but did not testify:* Allen Beinke, Texas Aggregates and Concrete Association; Jay Propes, SouthWestern Association)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Randy Elliston, Texas Department of Motor Vehicles)

BACKGROUND: Token trailers are semitrailers that weigh more than 6,000 pounds. Transportation Code, ch. 502 requires a token trailer's license plate to include the expiration date of its registration period. Transportation Code, sec. 621.002 requires the token trailer's registration receipt to be carried with the trailer when in use on a public highway.

A recent rule adopted by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) allows for token trailers to use non-expiring license plates. Token trailers may be registered individually or as a part of a commercial fleet, which is a group of at least 25 motor vehicles or trailers that are owned by a business entity.

DIGEST: CSHB 511 would require the TxDMV to issue a license plate for token trailers that did not expire or require annual registration insignia. The alphanumeric pattern for the license plate would remain on the token trailer for as long as its registration was renewed or until the trailer was removed from service or sold. The bill would end the requirement to carry a token trailer's registration receipt with the trailer when it was on a public highway. The bill would apply to token trailers registered individually or

as part of a commercial fleet.

The TxDMV would adopt rules to implement the bill as soon as practicable after the bill took effect.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2013.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 511 would reduce burdensome token trailer registration requirements that discourage semitrailer owners from registering their trailers in Texas. Currently, companies must keep the physical registration receipts in the pulling unit of the semitrailers when in use. This can be difficult to comply with because token trailers frequently transfer between different pulling units.

CSHB 511 also would codify a TxDMV rule that allows token trailers to use non-expiring plates. Placing the provision of this administrative rule in statute would relieve companies of the burden of tracking down their token trailers, which can be spread throughout the country and even internationally, to change the plates or registration insignia.

Many companies simply register their semitrailers in states without the burdensome requirements under current law. Eliminating these requirements would attract more trailer registrations to Texas and would help keep the registrations Texas already has. Because the bill would not adjust the registration fees, it would allow the revenue generated by trailer registration, which goes to the Highway Trust Fund, to increase.

Registration records are kept electronically, so the physical registration receipt and expiration date on the license plate are no longer necessary. Eliminating these requirements for token trailers would not impair the government's ability to regulate them.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 511 could make verifying the proper registration of token trailers more difficult for law enforcement officers. No longer requiring the physical registration receipt to be with the token trailer could inconvenience some law enforcement officers who may not have the proper equipment to electronically check registration. Removing the expiration date from the license plates of token trailers also could make it harder for law enforcement officers to identify token trailers that did not

have current registration.

NOTES:

The committee substitute differs from the bill as filed in that CSHB 511 would:

- include token trailers registered with a commercial fleet in the proposed changes;
- end the requirement to carry a token trailer's registration receipt when the trailer was on a public highway; and
- remove a requirement in the filed bill that would have required TxDMV to allow a person to register a non-commercial fleet token trailer on the department's Internet website.

The companion bill, SB 685 by Carona, was left pending in the Senate Transportation Committee on March 6.