

- SUBJECT:** Increasing fee for oversize or overweight cargo in Hidalgo County
- COMMITTEE:** Transportation — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Morrison, Martinez, Burkett, Y. Davis, Goldman, Israel, Phillips, Pickett, E. Thompson, Wray
- 0 nays
- 3 absent — Minjarez, Simmons, S. Thompson
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 26 — 27-4 (Buckingham, Burton, Hancock, V. Taylor)
- WITNESSES:** *On House companion bill, HB 2276:*
For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Gary Bushell, Alliance for I-69 Texas; Evelyn C. Castillo, Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority; Elizabeth Lippincott, Texas Border Coalition)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Chris Nordloh, Texas Department of Public Safety)
- BACKGROUND:** Transportation Code, ch. 623, subch. S allows a regional mobility authority to issue permits for the movement of an oversize or overweight vehicle carrying cargo in Hidalgo County on certain highways and roads. Under sec. 623.364, the maximum amount assessed for the permit may not exceed \$80 per trip. Fees collected must be used for the construction and maintenance of these roads and for the administrative costs incurred by the authority. Administrative costs may not exceed 15 percent of the fees collected.
- DIGEST:** CSSB 2227 would increase the cap on the permit fee for the movement of an oversize or overweight vehicle carrying cargo on certain roads in Hidalgo County to \$200 per trip.

The bill would require up to 5 percent of the fees collected to be used to leverage funding from other sources to construct a specified bridge, improve certain roads, and support the construction of roads proposed by the City of Donna that would connect a proposed commercial import lot to an existing road and highway.

The bill also would adjust the cap on the amount of the fees collected for permits issued for overweight and oversized vehicles carrying cargo in Hidalgo County that could be used for the applicable regional mobility authority's administrative costs to account for the new fee use added by the bill.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSSB 2227 would raise the cap on the fee for a permit issued for the movement of an oversize or overweight vehicle carrying cargo in Hidalgo County, which is currently too low when compared to the effort required by regional authorities to issue those permits and maintain the permit registration system. Additional funding is necessary to maintain the system adequately.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSSB 2227 would raise a permitting fee cap that was already raised in 2013 through HB 474 by Muñoz. The increase from \$80 to \$200 is unnecessary and could place a burden on those who must purchase the permits to move cargo in Hidalgo County.

NOTES:

CSSB 2227 differs from the Senate-passed version in that it would impose requirements on the percentage of funds used for administrative costs, and require that a certain percentage of funds be leveraged toward the construction of certain road projects.

In its fiscal note, the Legislative Budget Board estimates the fee increase authorized by the bill would have a positive impact of \$2.5 million to the State Highway Fund each fiscal year.

A companion bill, HB 2276 by Martinez, was placed on the general state calendar on May 9.