

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 298
By: Armbrister
Infrastructure
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As Filed

DIGEST

Metropolitan transit authorities (MTAs) are authorized under Chapter 451 and 452 of the Texas Transportation Code. MTAs have been created in seven urbanized areas of the state including Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio. In 1977 the Legislature created the Harris County Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO). METRO and the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority are the only two transit authorities that do not have withdrawal provisions for member municipalities. S.B. 298 only addresses the METRO and does not affect the Corpus Christi system. METRO includes the City of Houston and the fourteen (14) member municipalities.

Withdrawal provisions for rapid transit authorities exist in Chapter 451, Transportation Code. Procedures for withdrawal include requirements for a petition from a percentage of registered voters in a member city and an election to determine whether to withdraw from the authority. If a member city votes to withdraw from the authority, a determination of the total amount of financial obligation of the withdrawn city is calculated. The collection of sales and use tax continues in a member city after withdrawal until the net financial obligation is paid to the transit authority. The legislation specifies that withdrawal election dates may not be held earlier than the sixth (6th) anniversary of the date of the previous withdrawal election.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 298 revises the election population requirements for voting on the question of withdrawing from a rapid transit authority.

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 Section 451.617, Transportation Code, by amending Subsections (a) and (e) and adding Subsection (f), as follows:

- (a) Reduces the municipality population which is entitled to vote on the question of withdrawing from a rapid transit authority from being less than 1.2 million to being 750,000 or more.
- (e) Makes conforming and nonsubstantive changes.
- (f) Prohibits an election from being held on a certain date, in an authority created before 1980 in which the population is greater than 1.6 million.

SECTION 2. Emergency clause.
Effective date: upon passage.