

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.H.B. 2642
By: Kent et al. (Carona)
Transportation & Homeland Security
5/18/2009
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas' historic roads and highways are vital cultural resources, but these routes are being lost and forgotten in Texas' contemporary landscape. Texas lacks a coherent program to designate historic roads and highways and has no program to promote them as corridors for heritage tourism. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) manages heritage tourism programs through the heritage trails program, which was created in 1968 to encourage local tourism in Texas. The state's 10 heritage trails are not necessarily historic routes, but rather driving loops set up to connect points of historic or scenic interest in 10 designated heritage trail regions across Texas. There are also several historic routes in Texas that have been designated independent of the heritage trails program, including the Chisholm Trail and the Old San Antonio Road. Currently, there is no clear method for incorporating these routes into the existing regional framework, or for designating or introducing other historic roads to the system.

C.S.H.B. 2642 amends current law relating to a program to designate historic roads and highways in this state.

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 Subchapter A, Chapter 442, Government Code, by adding Section 442.025, as follows:

Sec. 442.025. TEXAS HISTORIC ROADS AND HIGHWAYS PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to cooperate with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to establish a program for the identification, designation, interpretation, and marketing of Texas historic roads and highways.

(b) Provides that the designation of a road or highway under a program established under this section is not, and may not be considered to be, a designation under the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. Section 470 et seq.).

(c) Authorizes THC and TxDOT, to supplement revenue available for the program, to pursue federal funds dedicated to highway enhancement for the program.

(d) Provides that TxDOT is not required to construct or erect a marker under this section unless a grant or donation of funds is made to cover the cost of the design, construction, and erection of the marker. Requires that money received to cover the cost of a marker under this subsection be deposited to the credit of the state highway fund.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2009.