

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
83R20567 AJZ-F

H.B. 2204
By: Pickett (Watson)
Transportation
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Regulating traffic flow through the use of variable speed limits has been shown to promote a smoother, safer flow of traffic and can be used to provide protection in maintenance work zones.

The Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) currently lacks the authority to establish variable speed limits, which are used to lower speed limits in response to conditions like adverse weather, congestion, work zones, and traffic incidents.

H.B. 2204 seeks to improve safety and operational efficiency in areas of reduced road capacity and reduce the possibility of primary and secondary traffic crashes by providing TTC the authority to establish variable speed limits.

H.B. 2204 amends current law relating to the authority of the Texas Transportation Commission to establish variable speed limits.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Transportation Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 545.353, Transportation Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 545.353, Transportation Code, by adding Subsection (k), as follows:

(k) Authorizes the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) by rule to establish a variable speed limit program to allow the temporary lowering of a prima facie speed limit to address inclement weather, congestion, road construction, or any other condition that affects the safe and orderly movement of traffic on a roadway for which TTC has the authority to establish a speed limit. Authorizes notice of a speed limit established under the program to be displayed using a stationary or portable changeable message sign, as defined by Section 544.013 (Changeable Message Sign System). Provides that a speed limit that is established under the program:

- (1) is required to be based on an engineering and traffic investigation;
- (2) is authorized to be effective for all or a designated portion of the highway and may be effective for any period of the day or night, as the Department of Public Safety acting directly or through its authorized officers and agents (department) determines necessary; and
- (3) is effective only when the speed limit is posted and only if a sign notifying motorists of the change in speed limit is posted not less than 500 feet but not more than 1,000 feet before the point at which the speed limit begins.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2013.