

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R189 JXC-F

S.B. 206
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Transportation
3/8/2021
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The 86th Legislature passed H.B. 1548, requiring golf carts and other off-road vehicles to obtain license plates to operate on roads. The bill applied statewide, but addressed an issue in coastal towns where these vehicles were driving on highways and causing an increasing number of accidents.

Many master planned communities, some of which fall in Senate District 5, were strategically planned with golf carts in mind. These communities are built to accommodate golf cart drivers, ensuring safe operation with slow speed limits, golf paths, and other targeted measures. However, the new law requiring all golf carts to obtain license plates has created an unintentional burden for residents who do not face the same risk as coastal towns with frequent tourist activity.

S.B. 206 would remove this license plate requirement for golf carts only operating in master planned communities, while maintaining the intent of the legislature when they passed H.B. 1548 last session.

As proposed, S.B. 206 amends current law relating to the operation of certain low-powered vehicles.

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 Section 551.304(a), Transportation Code, to authorize an operator to operate a neighborhood electric vehicle in a master planned community that meets certain conditions, including that it is a residential subdivision as defined by Section 209.002(9) (relating to definitions under the Texas Residential Property Owners Protection Act), Property Code.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 551.403, Transportation Code, as follows:

Sec. 551.403. OPERATION AUTHORIZED IN CERTAIN AREAS. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Authorizes an operator to operate a golf cart in a master planned community that meets certain conditions, including that it is a residential subdivision as defined by Section 209.002(9), Property Code.

(b) Authorizes a person, notwithstanding 551.402(b) (relating to the operation of a golf cart on the highway), to operate a golf cart in a master planned community described by Subsection (a) without a golf cart license plate.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 551.4031, Transportation Code, as follows:

Sec. 551.4031. PROHIBITION OF OPERATION ON HIGHWAY BY MUNICIPALITY, COUNTY, OR DEPARTMENT. (a) Authorizes a county or municipality to prohibit the operation of a golf cart on a highway under Section 551.403,

rather than Section 551.404 (Operation on Highway Authorized by Municipality or Certain Counties), if the governing body of the county or municipality determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

(b) Authorizes the Texas Department of Transportation to prohibit the operation of a golf cart on a highway under Section 551.403, rather than Section 551.404, if the Department of Public Safety determines that the prohibition is necessary in the interest of safety.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.