

Legislative Update
April 18, 2025

FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

Congress is on break for the Easter holiday and returns April 28, 2025.

FROM AUSTIN

SB 1, the two-year statewide budget, is going to conference and the conferees have been named. The Senate has appointed Senators Huffman (Houston), Creighton (Beaumont), Kolkhorst (Brenham), Nichols (Jacksonville), and Schwertner (Bryan). The House has also appointed its conferees as Representatives Bonnen (Friendswood), Mary Gonzalez (El Paso County), Kitzman (Waller County), Orr (Hill), and Walle (Houston). In a conference committee, the members are charged with reconciling differences between the two chambers.

The House Transportation Funding Subcommittee met on April 14 at 10 am to review several bills of interest. HB 1589 (Gerdes) would require voter approval for the construction of new toll projects, aiming to ensure taxpayers are not burdened with tolls they didn't approve. HB 2208 (Bumgarner) would increase transparency in toll billing by requiring toll notices and invoices to be sent via certified mail. HB 2297 (Cunningham) would suspend toll collection during evacuation orders, with a committee substitute clarifying the bill's language. HB 2725 (Cole) would propose toll exemptions for first responders commuting in personal vehicles to provide financial relief. HB 4417 (Gámez) would allow state highway funds to support Safe Routes to School sidewalk construction and replacement, as long as those funds are not federally or constitutionally restricted. HB 4473 (Canales) would direct TxDOT, in partnership with Texas A&M Transportation Institute, to study five types of county road administration systems to determine cost-efficiency and effectiveness over the past 25 years. HB 4520 (Martinez) would reduce the local match requirement from 10% to 5% for aviation facility grants in economically disadvantaged counties, helping small airports access funding. HB 4888 (Canales) would expand the role of Regional Mobility Authorities (RMAs), allowing them to finance transportation projects for local governments using surplus revenues, provided projects align with MPO-approved plans. Lastly, HB 4906 (Perez) corrects the misallocation of revenue from oversize/overweight vehicle permits, redirecting 50% of these funds back to the State Highway Fund and 50% to counties listed on permit applications, which would restore the original intent from legislation passed in the 83rd session. All bills were left pending.

The Senate Transportation Committee met on April 16 at 8 am to review and approve several bills. One bill of particular interest, SB 1013 (Eckhardt), which attempts to expand the definition of a crosswalk to include sidewalk areas that intersect with driveways and close a gap in the Lisa Torrey Smith Act that previously limited enforcement and penalties in such areas, was approved by the committee.

The House Transportation Committee met on April 17 at 8 am to hear testimony from Mr. Andy Jent, a representative of Texas Central Partners (TCP) and Kleinheinz Capital, on high-speed rail. This testimony comes as a result of Representative Mitch Little's subpoena request at last week's committee hearing. Representative Little asked Mr. Jent about the termination of the Amtrak grant under the Corridor Identification and Development (CID) Program, as well as TCP's current balance sheet. Mr. Jent assured the committee that the high-speed rail project is still alive and well, and that TCP fully supports the US Department of Transportation's (US DOT) decision. He additionally confirmed that TCP is unable to give a balance sheet this early in the process. Later in the hearing, Mr. Jent stated that TCP will be able to share more information about the company and the project later this quarter.

HIGHLIGHTED BILLS WITH ACTION

- SB 2425, Relating to the regulation of automated motor vehicles. Passed the full Senate on April 16. Received in the House.
- HB 2003, Relating to provision to the Texas Department of Transportation of information regarding certain high-speed rail projects. Voted favorably from House Transportation Committee on April 15, sent to the full House.
- HB 3309, Relating to the use of automated traffic control systems by local authorities and law enforcement agencies. Voted favorably from House Transportation Committee on April 15, sent to the full House.

UPCOMING COMMITTEE HEARINGS

TEXAS SENATE

- The Senate Transportation Committee will meet on Wednesday, April 23, at 8 am. The Committee will meet to consider the following bill of interest:
 - SB 2707 Relating to certain oversize or overweight vehicle permit fees or surety requirements
- The Senate Natural Resources Committee will meet on Wednesday, April 23, at 8 am. The Committee will meet to consider the following bill of interest:
 - SB 2351 Relating to the construction, expansion, or modification of certain concrete plants under a standard permit

TEXAS HOUSE

- The House Transportation Committee will meet on Tuesday, April 22 at 8 am. The Committee will meet to consider the following bills of interest:
 - HB 3331 Relating to the operation of vehicles transporting steel
 - HB 3514 Relating to the operation of a program by the Texas Department of Transportation to allow a real property owner to plant or replace vegetation in a right-of-way
 - HB 3528 Relating to the registration and inspection of vehicles
 - HB 3947 Relating to transportation planning by metropolitan planning organizations
 - HB 4880 Relating to sign requirements for construction or maintenance work zones
- The House Transportation Committee will meet on Thursday, April 24 at 8 am. The Committee will meet to consider the following bills of interest:
 - HB 2462 Relating to the use of a high occupancy vehicle lane by an operator of a motor vehicle who is pregnant
 - HB 2621 Relating to the recording and archiving of live video feed by the Texas Department of Transportation
 - HB 3187 Relating to powers of regional transportation authorities
 - HB 3539 Relating to the use of a high occupancy vehicle lane by an operator of a motor vehicle who is pregnant
 - HB 3563 Relating to the method used to select engineers and general contractors for certain transportation-related construction projects
 - HB 3726 Relating to the offense of passing certain vehicles on a highway
 - HB 4164 Relating to notice requirements on state highway projects
 - HB 4207 Relating to obstructing a railroad crossing and the liability of a railway company for such an obstruction
 - HB 4706 Relating to the applicability of certain pedestrian laws to certain sidewalk users
 - HB 5177 Relating to the use of certain tolls and charges imposed by certain counties

- The House Environmental Regulations Committee will meet on Thursday, April 24 at 10:30 am. The Committee will meet to consider the following bills of interest:
 - HB 2266 Relating to the processing of an application for an authorization to use a standard permit for a rock or concrete crushing facility
 - HB 2440 Relating to the authority of a state agency or the state's air quality state implementation plan to impose certain restrictions with respect to a motor vehicle, including a motor vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine
 - HB 4841 Relating to a program administered by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to connect clean vehicle program applicants with certain vehicle owners to facilitate the issuance of grants

US HOUSE

- The House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee will meet on April 30 to discuss President Trump's reconciliation package, aiming to deliver roughly \$10 billion in net savings. Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) is also considering a \$150 annual fee on EVs to support the Highway Trust Fund, potentially raising \$20-40 billion over the next decade.

RECENT COMMITTEE HEARINGS

TEXAS HOUSE

- State Affairs (April 14)
 - HB 755 Relating to certain requirements applicable to certain public entities that engage in lobbying (Pending)
- Transportation Funding Subcommittee (April 14)
 - HB 1589 Relating to requiring voter approval for the construction of a new toll project by a toll project entity (Pending)
 - HB 2208 Relating to requirements for certain notices or invoices relating to toll collections by a toll project entity (Pending)
 - HB 2297 Relating to the suspension of toll collection while an evacuation order is in effect (Pending)
 - HB 2725 Relating to discount programs provided by toll project entities for certain customers (Pending)
 - HB 4417 Relating to the use of certain money from the state highway fund for certain projects in the Safe Routes to School Program (Pending)
 - HB 4473 Relating to a study by the Texas Department of Transportation of the construction and maintenance of certain county road systems in this state (Pending)
 - HB 4520 Relating to requirements for loans or grants provided by the Texas Transportation Commission to aviation facilities located in economically disadvantaged counties (Pending)
 - HB 4888 Relating to the provision by a regional mobility authority of financial assistance for transportation projects of governmental entities located in the area of the authority (Pending)
 - HB 4906 Relating to the dedication of revenue received from certain oversize or overweight vehicle permits to the state highway fund (Pending)
- Energy Resources (April 14)
 - HB 5600 Relating to the development and expansion of clean hydrogen production, distribution, and utilization in this state (Pending)
- Appropriations (April 15)

- HB 4488 Relating to the creation and re-creation of funds and accounts, the dedication and rededication of revenue and allocation of accrued interest on dedicated revenue, and the exemption of unappropriated money (Pending)
- Delivery of Government Efficiency (April 16)
 - HB 3895 Relating to a study by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute on wireless energy transmission for electric vehicles (Pending)
 - HB 4990 Relating to compliance with the public information law, including establishment of an open records hotline to provide information about the requirements of the public information law (Pending)
 - HB 4991 Relating to open meetings and public information training for certain public officials and attorneys regarding the open meetings and public information laws (Pending)
- Land and Resource Management (April 17)
 - HB 447 Relating to traffic studies before the issuance of certain municipal utility district bonds (Pending)
 - HB 993 Relating to the time for processing a municipal building permit application (Pending)
- Transportation (April 17)
 - The summary is discussed above.
- Environmental Regulation (April 17)
 - HB 4519 Relating to programs established and funded under the Texas emissions reduction plan (Pending)
 - HB 5033 Relating to elimination of the motor vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program (Pending)

TEXAS SENATE

- Local Government (April 14)
 - SB 325 Relating to county regulation of subdivisions and approval of subdivision plans or plats (Pending)
- Transportation (April 16)
 - SB 1013 Relating to the definition of a crosswalk (Approved)