

## **Legislative Update**

### **March 21, 2025**

#### **FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.**

On March 15, President Trump signed into law the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025. The Federal government will remain funded at FY24 levels through September 30, 2025.

On March 14, the Trump administration nominated Sean McMaster to lead the Federal Highway Administration. Like other USDOT representatives, McMaster must go through the standard confirmation process, requiring majority support from the Science, Commerce, and Transportation Committee before advancing to a full Senate floor vote.

#### **FROM AUSTIN**

Friday, March 14, was the final day for Texas legislators to submit new bills for consideration during the 89th Texas Legislature. November 12, 2024, was the first day elected officials could file new legislation. The 89th Legislature convened on January 14 and will gavel out on June 2. The final day the governor can sign or veto bills passed during the regular session is June 22.

The Senate Finance Committee has signed off on a proposal for the 2026-27 budget. The spending plan includes property tax cuts, increased border security, and public education funding. It is still being determined how the substantial \$24 billion surplus will affect transportation funding. The bill will be debated on the Senate floor where amendments will be added, then the same process will take place in the House and ultimately go to a conference committee to work out the differences before a final budget is voted on.

The House Transportation Committee held a meeting on March 20 at 8 am. The Committee considered a few bills of interest. HB 408, by Rep. Harris Davila, seeks to ensure that TxDOT prioritizes cost-effectiveness and durability when evaluating bids for highway materials, rather than giving preference based on environmental, social, or governance criteria like carbon emissions. The bill, which passed unanimously in committee last session but was placed on the calendar too late for final passage, remains pending. HB 1607, by Rep. Metcalf, proposes removing the requirement for front license plates in Texas, aligning with 21 other states. The bill proposed the use of windshield insignia for cars manufactured without a rear license plate mounting area. Law enforcement representatives expressed concerns about the impact on public safety and crime prevention, while representatives questioned potential effects on vehicle registration costs and license plate readability by cameras. This bill was also left pending.

#### **MONITORED BILLS LIST**

If you need information on the state or federal bills being tracked, please contact Jackie Nolasco.

- A table of state bills related to the RTC Legislative Program can be found [here](#).
- [Texas Legislature](#)
- [US Congress](#)

#### **HIGHLIGHTED BILLS**

##### **Sales Tax**

HB 134 Meyer – Relating to the location at which certain sales are consummated for purposes of local sales and use taxes. Would redefine the location at which certain sales are consummated for purposes

of local sales and use taxes, particularly affecting small businesses and retailers with active economic development agreements.

#### **TERP**

HB 4519 Ordaz – Relating to programs established and funded under the Texas emissions reduction plan. Would amend various sections of the Texas Health and Safety Code to restructure and refine funding allocations and eligibility criteria for emissions reduction programs under the Texas emissions reduction plan, including removing several existing programs and establishing new grant provisions.

#### **Tolls**

SB 2324 Paxton – Relating to the cessation of tolls by toll project entities in certain circumstances. Would mandate that toll projects in Texas cease collecting tolls once their acquisition and construction costs, along with bond obligations, are fully satisfied, and it will establish protocols for the ongoing maintenance of these projects thereafter.

HB 5347 Metcalf – Relating to the construction of nontolled frontage roads adjacent to certain toll projects. Would require the construction of at least one adjacent nontolled frontage road lane in each direction for certain new toll projects along previously nontolled highways, applicable to projects contracted on or after September 1, 2025.

#### **Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety**

HB 4868 Martinez – Relating to allowing a bicyclist to treat certain traffic-control devices as a yield sign. Would allow bicyclists in Texas to treat stop signs, steady red signals, and flashing red signals as yield signs.

#### **Emissions**

HB 5033 Bell – Relating to elimination of the motor vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program. Would eliminate the motor vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program in Texas if specific federal legislative or judicial changes occur, such as the repeal or amendment of the federal Clean Air Act.

#### **Transit**

HB 5049 Shaheen – Relating to the composition and authority of certain subregional boards of regional transportation authorities (DART). Would reorganize the composition and authority of subregional boards of regional transportation authorities by adjusting membership appointment to reflect one member per city, term lengths, voting rights, and leadership rotation.

#### **HIGHLIGHTED BILLS WITH ACTION**

- SB 15 Bettencourt, Relating to size and density requirements for residential lots in certain municipalities; authorizing a fee. Passed the full Senate, Received in the House.
- SB 19 Middleton, Relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying and certain other activities. Passed the full Senate, Received in the House.
- SB 35 Nichols, Relating to design build contracts. Passed the full Senate, Received in the House
- SB 1902 Nichols, Relating to the administration of the dealer-issued license plates database and to the removal and transfer of license plates. Passed the full Senate, Received in the House.
- SB 1555 Nichols, Relating to a grant program to fund certain railroad grade separation projects. Voted favorably out of the Senate Transportation Committee, placed on Senate Intent Calendar for debate on March 24.

- SB 1 Huffman, General Appropriations Bill. Voted favorably out of the Senate Finance Committee, placed on Senate Intent Calendar for debate on March 24.

## **RECENT COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

### **TEXAS HOUSE**

- On March 20, the House Transportation Committee met to consider a number of bills. The summary is discussed above.

### **US CONGRESS**

- Congress has been on their mid-March recess and has been away since March 14. Committee hearings will resume next week on March 24.

## **UPCOMING COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

### **TEXAS SENATE**

- The Senate Transportation Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 26, at 8am. The Committee will meet to consider the following bills of interest:
  - SB 546 Relating to seat belts on buses that transport children
  - SB 744 Relating to the enforcement of the prohibition on passing a school bus using images and video from a school bus infraction detection system
  - SB 1365 Relating to vehicle registration, license plates, and inspection reports
  - SB 1366 Relating to the inclusion of information about construction or maintenance work zones in the curriculum of driver education and driving safety courses
  - SB 1394 Relating to weight and tire load restrictions for the operation of a vehicle transporting ready-mixed concrete on a public highway
  - SB 1729 Relating to the registration and inspection of vehicles
  - SB 1841 Relating to the confidentiality of certain information collected by certain local governments and airport governing boards

### **TEXAS HOUSE**

- The House Transportation Committee will meet on Thursday, March 27, at 8am. The Committee will meet to consider the following bills of interest:
  - HB 2041 Relating to the criminal offense of passing certain vehicles on a highway
  - HB 2270 Relating to the disclosure of certain information regarding a record of a collision or violation involving a person operating a railroad locomotive or train
  - HB 3034 Relating to the enforcement of the prohibition on passing a school bus using images and video from a school bus infraction detection system
- The House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Broadband will meet on Monday, March 24, at 10 am.
  - The subcommittee will meet for the purpose of an organizational hearing to take invited testimony on matters relating to: The provision of broadband services in Texas.

### **US HOUSE**

- The House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit will meet on March 26 to discuss the trucking industry and evaluate its impact on American communities.

