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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Gonzales ORIGINAL DATE 2/20/17
 LAST UPDATED 3/16/17 HB 349/aHJC/aHFI#1

SHORT TITLE Yield To Transit Buses Displaying Yield Sign SB _____

ANALYST Romero/Chabot

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	NFI	NFI	NFI	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Conflicts with: SB 55

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Floor Amendment

The House Floor amendment to House Bill 349 adds a definition for “passenger van” which means “a vehicle with seating for thirteen or fewer people, maximum interior headroom of fifty-two inches and single rear tires;” It also strikes HJC amendment #1 and replaces it with similar language, “a driver shall yield the right of way to a transit bus, excepting a passenger van, when an illuminated sign is displayed on the rear of the bus and the bus is attempting to merge into a traffic lane”. The amendment also changes the effective date to be July 1, 2019.

Synopsis of House Judiciary Committee Amendment

The House Judiciary Committee amendment to House Bill 349 changes the section of yield to transit buses by stating the transit buses must have an illuminated yield sign displayed and be attempting to merge into a traffic line. In addition a separate paragraph is added stating “This section does not relieve a driver of a transit bus from any applicable laws or duty of care.”

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 349 adds a new section to the Motor Vehicle Code and adds new definitions to the code. The three definitions are “mass transit”, “public mass transit”, and “transit bus”. The new section requires vehicle drivers, behind a bus that is attempting to enter a traffic lane, to yield the right of way to allow the bus to enter traffic. It does not require public mass transit operators to install yield signs on its busses. Additionally, a person who violates this provision is guilty of a misdemeanor and fined \$25 pursuant to the amended penalty assessment misdemeanors schedule of assessments of this bill.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No major fiscal implications. The Administrative Office of the Courts notes that there will be a minimal cost to update systems of statute changes. However, the operating budget will absorb the cost.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Current state laws provide that motorist lawfully driving within a roadway or lane have right of way to those who are entering or re-entering a roadway or lane of travel, unless otherwise provided by law or other direction is given by a person such as a police officer who may lawfully direct traffic. It may take some time for motorist become familiar with this requirement if enacted into law.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

There is a potential vagueness on page 10, lines 9 and 10. This part of the bill says a bus “illuminates a sign displayed on its back that warns vehicle drivers behind the bus...” However, the bill does not provide details about how those signs should look, nor are there any other provisions about bus lights or signs that must be displayed.

IR/al/jle