

Senate Committee on State Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lori Friedman

(512) 463-0380

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Senate State Affairs to Meet on Transportation Issues in Houston

The Senate Committee on State Affairs, chaired by Senator Florence Shapiro, R-Plano, has scheduled two meetings in Houston to discuss transportation issues. The first meeting will begin at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 12, and the second meeting will begin at 9 a.m. on Thursday, April 13. Both meetings will be held at the Red Lion Hotel, 2525 West Loop South.

The State Affairs Committee will focus on four of the 10 charges received from Lt. Governor Rick Perry for study during the interim.

On Wednesday, the Committee will hear testimony regarding the safety of the state's commercial trucking industry, including the enforcement of truck safety regulations by the Department of Public Safety and other law enforcement agencies, and the effectiveness of current laws relating to overweight and oversized vehicles. The Committee also will discuss the state's intermodal transportation system with an emphasis on NAFTA-related trade corridors and their impact on both metropolitan and rural areas of the state.

During the Thursday hearing, members will examine the funding and expenditures of Metropolitan Transit Authorities (MTAs) and the budgetary relationships they have with the cities they serve. Additionally, members will receive reports on the implementation of S.B. 138, relating to government restrictions on the exercise of religion, and H.B. 2611, relating to electronic reporting of political contributions and expenditures.

"The Committee has been asked to evaluate the safety of the state's commercial trucking industry," Senator Shapiro said. "The fact is that Texas leads the nation in heavy truck deaths, and Harris County leads Texas. That is why the State Affairs Committee is meeting in Houston with locally-elected officials, and representatives from the trucking industry and law enforcement agencies. I hope we can all work together to make our roads safer for everyone."

Representatives from the Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Motor Transportation Association, Houston Police Department, Harris County and Dallas County sheriff's departments, and the City of Houston and Harris County will attend the Wednesday meeting.

For the Thursday hearing, representatives from the cities of Houston, Humble, and San Antonio, Houston METRO, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority in Austin, and VIA Metropolitan Transportation Authority in San Antonio will be testifying before the Committee. Public testimony from the community and surrounding areas also will be taken at the hearing.

The Committee has scheduled hearings in all areas of the state to put together a statewide strategy for transportation that will account for the needs of individual communities. The Houston hearing is the eighth of 10 hearings being held by the State Affairs Committee during the interim to discuss transportation-related issues. The Senate Special Committee on Border Affairs will be in attendance at the Wednesday hearing.