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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING

Ric Williamson Hearing Room
Dewitt Greer Building
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas

Thursday
October 29, 2015
9:00 a.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Tryon D. Lewis, Chair
Jeff Austin, III
Jeff Moseley
Victor Vandergriff
J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.

STAFF:

Lt. General Joe Weber, Executive Director
Joanne Wright, Deputy General Counsel
Robin Carter, Commissioner Chief Clerk

Job No. 2158063

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PROCEEDINGS

1
2 MR. LEWIS: Let's see. It is 9 a.m. I'll
3 call to order the October 29, 2015 meeting of the Texas
4 Transportation Commission in Austin, Texas. I'd also
5 note for the record that a public notice of this meeting
6 containing all items on the agenda was filed with the
7 Secretary of State's office at 3:40 p.m. on October 21,
8 2015, which is seven days prior to the meeting and meets
9 the requirements of Government Code Section 551.044.

10 At this time, I'd like to ask that before we
11 begin today's meeting, all of you place your cell phones
12 or other communication devices in silent or off. As I'm
13 doing mine, please do yours.

14 If you wish to address the Commission during
15 today's meeting, I'd like you to please complete a
16 speaker's card at the registration table that you passed
17 coming in here. There are two cards.

18 If you wish to address the Commission on an
19 item that's on our agenda, that's actually posted on the
20 agenda, then you use this yellow card, and just fill it
21 out. It has a place that says you wish to make a
22 statement or do not wish to make a statement, the agenda
23 item number, and that's found on the posted notice, what
24 your position is on it, your name.

25 If you're here representing someone other

1 than yourself, in other words, you're here for a group,
2 an agency, association or whatever, you put what your
3 title is and who you're representing, and also note
4 whether you are employed by TxDOT, do business with
5 TxDOT, or whatever. So that's if it's an agenda item.

6 If you are here and you wish to speak to the
7 Commission but it's not an agenda item, it is an open --
8 what we call an open comment, you may do so. And in
9 that case, you fill out this blue card. It's similar,
10 and the information that it requests, in both instances,
11 on the agenda item you'll -- those who wish to speak on
12 an agenda item will come forward when that agenda item
13 comes up.

14 Then, at the end of our meeting, when all
15 agenda items are completed, then those who wish to make
16 a statement during Open Comment period come forward.
17 You come up to this podium here, this dais. There's a
18 microphone there, just adjust it for your height. State
19 your name, if you're here representing someone, who
20 you're representing. And then you'll make your -- you
21 have an opportunity to make a statement at that -- at
22 that time.

23 I do want you to know that if
24 it is not an agenda item, it's an Open Comment period,
25 that since it's not a posted agenda item, the members of
the Commission will not be able to address that item,

1 ask you questions, or make statements in response.

2 It's not being rude, that's just the law and
3 we cannot -- since it's not an agenda item, we cannot
4 participate in that, I guess you could say. It's just
5 an opportunity for the public to make a statement on any
6 subject. Regardless of whether it is an agenda item or
7 Open Comment, we do have a rule to keep comments down to
8 three minutes. We have a clock, and I'll let you know
9 when your three minutes have expired.

10 Before we begin further with our agenda
11 items, I'm going to turn the microphone over to our
12 Executive Director, General Joe Weber. General.

13 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Chairman. At this
14 time I'd like to ask our Occupational Safety Specialist
15 Randy Clawson to come forward and give us our safety
16 brief. Randy.

17 RANDY CLAWSON: Thank you, General Weber.
18 I'm going to be asking three questions upfront that I'd
19 like to ask you to help me with. In case we have an
20 emergency, who would dial 911 in the room, in case we
21 have an emergency?

22 (Audience member raises hand)

23 RANDY CLAWSON: Thank you, very much. Of
24 course, if you have a cell phone, dial 911. If you were
25 to go to a TxDOT landline, of course, you would dial 9

1 to get an outside line here in this building, then dial
2 911. Make sure that you are letting folks know, when
3 you make a call, that we are at 125 East 11th Street,
4 and you might mention we're directly across from the
5 State Capitol.

6 The second question -- second question is
7 who would lead emergency personnel to this room in case
8 we had a need for that? Who could help us with that?

9 (Audience member raises hand)

10 RANDY CLAWSON: All right. He would also
11 lead us -- lead us there. Who in this meeting is first
12 aid or CPR trained and could administer that if it was
13 needed?

14 (Audience member raises hand)

15 RANDY CLAWSON: All right. Thank you, very
16 much. Make note of that. All right. Very good. Even
17 if you're not trained on first aid, CPR want to let you
18 know that there is an AED out by the security booth.
19 And when you open that up and push the green button, it
20 will step you through the procedures for CPR and how to
21 do that. First aid kits are marked and located
22 throughout the building.

23 Now, in case of fire, there are pull alarm
24 stations in the lobby. The lobby's right out here to my
25 side here. The emergency evacuation plans are listed

1 near the elevators and near the exit routes. The Greer
2 primary exit, I want to let you know, is the front of
3 this building, facing 11th Street. Some secondary exits
4 off of this building would be to the east here, is
5 Brazos and to the west, that -- that you would access
6 from the basement would take you towards Congress as you
7 get out of the building.

8 Once you get out of the building, you'd want
9 to gather on the Capitol lawn -- Capitol lawn area. If
10 you need a fire extinguisher, we have several ABC fire
11 extinguishers in this building that are marked and
12 located on each floor. If you're capable of
13 extinguishing a fire, then use as directed by pulling
14 the pin, standing approximately eight feet away from the
15 fire, then you would squeeze the trigger and have a
16 sweeping motion as you aim at the base of the fire.

17 In case of a tornado or inclement weather we
18 do have shelter in place here in this building. You'd
19 want to obviously stay inside and not go outside. You'd
20 want to move away from exterior walls and windows. And
21 the primary shelters, I want to let you know, for this
22 building of the Greer are the stairwells and the
23 basement. Secondary shelter areas would be the lower
24 part of our stairwells, interior hallways, and centrally
25 located restrooms.

1 Now, in case of an active shooter or bomb
2 threat, each person is responsible for judging the
3 situation and their own safety. Follow instructions
4 from the public address system, and security, and our
5 onsite personnel.

6 Any questions about anything I've shared
7 this morning? If not, thank you for your time, and hope
8 that you have a safe and productive meeting. My
9 pleasure.

10 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Randy. And
11 Chairman, with our safety briefing completed, I'll turn
12 the meeting back over to you.

13 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much, General
14 Weber. To open the meeting, it's our tradition to allow
15 our Commissioners to make opening statements on issues
16 and matters of importance to this -- this Commission,
17 this Department, and the State, and we will begin with
18 Commissioner Bruce Bugg.

19 MR. BUGG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd
20 like to start the meeting this morning and just thank
21 the men and women of TxDOT who were so instrumental in
22 saving lives and helping people during the flooding last
23 weekend. It came up very quickly. And my wife's
24 family, a lot of them live in Waco.

25 And, in particular, I know the Waco District

1 participated in between 25 and 30 high water rescues,
2 rescuing 43 individuals. There were numerous occasions
3 where they were helping Texans with all the different
4 emergent issues that popped up.

5 And I just want to do a callout to the TxDOT
6 maintenance crews statewide, because our TxDOT
7 maintenance crews performed beautifully during very
8 adverse circumstances, and kept everything going. So I
9 just want to say y'all made us TxDOT proud. Thank you.

10 (Audience applauds)

11 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Commissioner.
12 Commissioner Vandergriff.

13 MR. VANDERGRIFF: I'm just looking forward
14 to a great meeting. So I will pass it on.

15 MR. LEWIS: Vice Chair Moseley.

16 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman and members, couple
17 weeks ago our Safety Task Force met with DPS to talk
18 about how to enhance safety on our Texas highways.
19 Major Palmer invited more than 30 law enforcement
20 officials to come in from around the state.

21 And one of the facts that we talked about
22 are that the five states with the lowest fatal accidents
23 per 100,000 population are Massachusetts, New Jersey,
24 New York, Rhode Island, and Washington with
25 approximately 6.1 deaths per 100,000. It's interesting

1 that Texas ranks basically with 12.8 deaths per 100,000,
2 and California has 7.8 deaths per 100,000.

3 So we look forward to pulling more and more
4 ideas together on how to make our highways safer. But
5 we do have an anniversary coming up on November 7th,
6 Chairman and members. This will be the last time, 15
7 years ago, since we had a deathless day on Texas
8 highways.

9 So that's why we're committed, chairman and
10 members, to bring back to you some recommendations and
11 some ideas on how to take a bite out of the number of
12 deaths and crashes on our -- on our highway system.

13 I was very honored to join General Weber and
14 Carol Rawson at the TxDOT Maintenance and Traffic
15 Operations conference. As Commissioner Bugg identified,
16 these are the men and women that are out on the
17 frontline, that are there to really serve the public.
18 And I echo his comments. They -- they really exhibit
19 tremendous service to the state, particularly in the
20 central Texas, Waco District region. So I echo his --
21 his comments about how wonderfully they performed.

22 Chairman and members, next week I'll join
23 Lieutenant Governor Patrick for a press conference and
24 announcement on Get Out the Vote related to Proposition
25 7. And then after that I'll be joining Chairman Nichols

1 at the Greater Houston Partnership luncheon, again, on
2 getting out the vote. So with that, we'll look forward
3 to a successful election day. Thank you, very much.

4 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much.
5 Commissioner Austin.

6 MR. AUSTIN: Good morning, everyone. I know
7 many of you have traveled, and hopefully our Aviation
8 Committee here has flown in. So thank y'all for being
9 here, look forward to hearing your report in a few
10 minutes.

11 I echo the comments Commissioner Bugg and
12 Moseley have made about safety, but I want to share
13 something that -- what TxDOT is doing. There's a few
14 little things that we put out for the public that I
15 think we need to do a better job on sharing that.
16 Drivetexas.org.

17 You'll see some cards out there that may
18 look like this, just to give you a -- a notification or
19 show what the address is. This is a web page. It's not
20 an app, but it's mobile friendly that you can download,
21 put on your phone, your iPad, whatever it is.

22 What Drivetexas.org does, it shares with you
23 where the closures are, where there's accidents, where
24 there's big delays whether it's fog, water, rain,
25 hurricane, rail accident, whatever it is. Whatever you

1 need to know about traveling Texas roads, this is
2 available.

3 During the last flooding, we had over
4 263,000 hits to the web page. And also with our call --
5 the 1-800 number, over 15,000. So you'll see us talking
6 about this a little bit more. In 2015 we've already had
7 over 3.1 million hits to the web page, in all of 2014 is
8 1.4. So please utilize this. We'll do a better job of
9 getting this information out, either our web page,
10 because it is for you as Texans as you drive to know
11 what -- what's going on.

12 I'd like to share a couple of letters and
13 compliments. While we talk about web page, let's talk
14 about audit for a second. I see a CPA, Mr. Dixon,
15 sitting down here.

16 MR. DIXON: Engineer.

17 MR. AUSTIN: I have a letter from
18 Commissioner of Insurance, David Maddox, complimenting
19 our auditor, Benny, Benito Ybarra, we call him "Benny,"
20 for being the lead on the peer review team for the state
21 agency internal audit forum.

22 And what he's doing -- this is a compliment,
23 because what Benny is doing is our auditor and his team,
24 spending time with other agencies, learning, bringing
25 back best practices. So Benny, thank you for what

1 you're doing. You certainly represent us well and
2 you're really bringing good comments back.

3 Now, with that, they're also doing their
4 job. And I know we're going to have a presentation,
5 probably in December, audit committee meeting. You're
6 coming back, and you probably heard us talk about
7 contract management. They're going in, they're driving
8 in, they're looking at contract performance.

9 And are we holding folks accountable to the
10 contracts written as they are? We have room to improve.
11 We're doing a self evaluation. We're doing -- we're
12 auditing this. We're coming back. I hope this is --
13 I'm not trying to get ahead of the report.

14 But there's a fine line that we need to
15 manage of managing performance versus just the
16 relationship, and I think that's something we're going
17 to be really -- you'll hear us talking more and more
18 about it and holding accountable. So to the contractors
19 and to our team, please be patient with one another.
20 But we do have a contract for a reason, and we need to
21 make sure we're enforcing it and holding folks
22 accountable through those.

23 Couple other -- some good news. I believe
24 it is being announced today that Texas is going to
25 receive one of the TIGER grants that we applied for.

1 \$20 million for rural transportation in four towns.
2 That will help replace 325 vehicles statewide for the
3 transportation of rural residents, and to help update
4 some of the transportation facilities near the
5 communities of South Padre Island, Early, Weatherford,
6 and Cedar Creek. So congrats to the team in helping
7 move this forward, USDOT approve -- approving this as
8 well.

9 One -- one final note, Texas Highways, few
10 of y'all may look at this online or receive the actual
11 magazine, has been honored in a big way. The magazine
12 is part of a regional group called IRMA, International
13 Regional Magazine Association, and just -- they just had
14 their convention in San Diego, and Texas Highways
15 brought home 17 awards. And I give congrats to the team
16 of really putting folks out.

17 On page 46, there's one thing that I had
18 nothing to do with. It talks about the best burger in
19 Texas, and it's Jucy's in Tyler. I did not have a vote.
20 I voted with a few extra pounds, and it is really good.

21 MR. MOSELEY: That's news you could use.

22 MR. AUSTIN: I think you've been there. But
23 the Gold award came for best photo, best art direction,
24 best stories. If you haven't had a chance, these are
25 some of the good things, especially with visitors coming

1 in. And, you know, when you talk about traveling out of
2 state, use -- take this and our maps to travel in Texas
3 because we have a lot of great things -- lot of great
4 things here.

5 Finally, I got a little good news yesterday.
6 Looks like Congress is going to pass a three-week
7 extension for our funding, hopefully to be able to
8 negotiate a longer term bill, which we desperately need.
9 And, you know, we spend a lot of attention -- and
10 Senator Huffines is here. Thank y'all for what you're
11 doing in Prop 7. I know we've got two votes for it.

12 But we spend a lot of time focusing on
13 Texas. Federal funding is about 42 percent of our
14 entire balance sheet. So we need to pay attention and
15 really appreciate Governor Abbot sending a letter to the
16 Texas Delegation really focusing on the reimbursement
17 rate to make sure that our entire delegation is engaged
18 to make sure we're bringing back our fair share of
19 dollars. With that, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

20 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much for those
21 -- those remarks, Commissioner Austin. We -- as
22 Commissioner Austin mentioned, we have a visiting
23 dignitary here, Senator Don Huffines. Senator Huffines,
24 do you care to address the Commission?

25 SENATOR DON HUFFINES: No, I'm okay. Thank

1 you.

2 MR. LEWIS: If that changes at any time,
3 just let us know and we'll make room for you.

4 SENATOR DON HUFFINES: Okay. Thank you.

5 MR. LEWIS: With that, the first order of
6 business is the approval of the minutes from the
7 September 24, 2015 meeting of the Texas Transportation
8 Commission. Draft minutes have been provided to each of
9 our Commissioners. And, Commissioner Austin, do you
10 move to approve the minutes of the September 24th
11 regular meeting?

12 MR. AUSTIN: I move they be approved.

13 MR. LEWIS: And Vice Chair --

14 MR. MOSELEY: Second.

15 MR. LEWIS: -- Moseley? Second? We have a
16 motion and a second. All in favor please say, "Aye."

17 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

18 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Motion carries
19 unanimously. And with that, General, I'll turn the
20 agenda back over to you to work through today's
21 business.

22 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Chairman. I'd like
23 to start right with item 3(a), a discussion of the 2016
24 Unified Transportation Program November updates. Our
25 Transportation Planning and Programing Division Director

1 James Koch will present. James.

2 JAMES KOCH: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
3 Commissioners, members, and General Weber. For the
4 record, my name is James Koch, Transportation Planning
5 and Programing Division Director for TxDOT. This
6 presentation highlights the anticipated changes to the
7 2016 UTP for approval during the November UTP revisions.

8 We'd like to begin our UTP briefings with a
9 reminder to the Commission on the UTP process. We start
10 the update process by developing an initial draft of
11 proposed revisions. We then host a statewide public
12 meeting via WebEx, which provides an overview of the
13 proposed changes and information on how the public can
14 submit comments or questions.

15 We then move into a 30-day comment period
16 during which we provide Commission briefings as a means
17 of improving both public and Commission awareness of key
18 changes proposed for consideration as part of the UTP.

19 During this time, we review and address any
20 comments that may have been received, as well as host a
21 public hearing prior to bringing the final proposed
22 revisions before the Commission for potential adoption.

23 The UTP is a document that is based on a set
24 of assumptions regarding revenue and funding
25 availability we will have. As those funding assumptions

1 change or new information is made available, we update
2 the UTP.

3 In this revision, changes to funding levels
4 based on a revised financial forecast, increase federal
5 funding levels based on the redistribution of the FY
6 2015 obligation authority, and increased federal
7 obligation authority in federal fiscal year 2016 for
8 MAP-21.

9 This revision increased state funding levels
10 in FY 2016 and FY 2017 based on the legislature's choice
11 to reduce the appropriations of state highway funds to
12 other agencies which increases the amount available to
13 TxDOT known as the recapture diversions. A portion of
14 these funds were transferred to the right of way and
15 engineering and operational budgets for the department.

16 We have reduced Prop -- Proposition 1
17 targets for FY 2016 based on the State Comptroller's
18 Office estimates. Projections for FY 2017 Prop 1
19 targets are also much lower. Those reductions are not
20 included in this UTP revision. However, we will
21 incorporate them once the cash flow forecast has been
22 updated to reflect this.

23 For all of these additions, there are no
24 associated priority authorizations tied to this funding
25 in this UTP revision. We are evaluating needs and will

1 authorize projects against this funding in later UTP
2 revisions. Administrative revisions include carryover
3 balances from the fiscal year 2015. Please note,
4 administrative changes are those project for funding
5 changes that are minor in nature.

6 The movement of projects within the first
7 two years of the lending schedules is considered
8 administrative, along with the carryover balances at the
9 end of the fiscal year.

10 For proposed projects specific program
11 updates, the main focus is the authorization of
12 Proposition 1, Category 2 Congestion, and Category 4
13 Connectivity Project Selections. This also includes
14 revisions to projects utilizing the remaining balances
15 of FY '15 Proposition 1 funding.

16 Beyond Prop 1, the following revisions are
17 related to previously authorized projects. Revisions to
18 the State Highway 26 project through the city of
19 Colleyville to reflect the rescinded pass-through
20 finance agreement and authorization of Category 12
21 funds. The pas-through finance agreement was rescinded
22 in September 2015 Commission meeting.

23 Revisions to previously authorized U.S. 290
24 and State Highway 249 projects in the Houston District
25 in accordance with the recently amended agreement with

1 HCTRA. Updates reflect a transfer of Category 12
2 Funding from State Highway 249 to U.S. 290, and a
3 replacement Category 3 Local Funds on the State Highway
4 249 project. Administrative amendments to projects and
5 programs are available for viewing online.

6 As an illustration, this slide shows the
7 capabilities and user friendliness of the Proposition 1
8 website that allows our customers to reference projects
9 based on location. The Proposition 1 site currently
10 displays FY 2015 and FY 2016 Prop 1 projects.

11 After today's presentation, the next steps
12 for the adoption of the revisions to the 2016 UTP
13 will be 22.

14 Include a public hearing on November 5, 2015
15 at 10 a.m. at the Riverside Campus. The Open Comment
16 period is currently open and will end on November 16,
17 2015.

18 On November 19, 2015, we will present the
19 final documents to you to recommend approval of the
20 revisions to the 2016 UTP. Again, we're in the Open
21 Comment period until November 16, 2015. Draft exhibits
22 can be found by going to www.txdot.gov and searching for
23 TxDOT UTP.

24 We ask that all comments be received using
25 the e-mail link on our public involvement site by

1 calling 1-800-687-8108 or by attending the public
2 meeting on November 5, 2015 at 118 East Riverside Drive,
3 Building 118, Austin, Texas 78704. Again, on November
4 19, 2015 we will present the final draft exhibits for
5 consideration by the Commission for approval.

6 This concludes my presentation at this time.
7 I can address any further questions that you may have.

8 MR. LEWIS: Are there any questions at this
9 time? Thank you, sir.

10 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, James. Next is item
11 3(b), a presentation from the Aviation Advisory
12 Committee. And our Aviation Division Director Dave
13 Fulton will start us off. Dave.

14 DAVE FULTON: Thank you, General Weber
15 Commissioners. For the record, my name is Dave Fulton.
16 I am the Director of TxDOT's Aviation Division. This
17 item is a report from the Texas Aviation Advisory
18 Committee. The report will be presented by Mr. Jim
19 Schwertner, chairman of that committee.

20 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. I do have a card
21 from Jim Schwertner. Please come forward. After
22 stating your name, who you're here representing, please
23 give us the benefit of your thoughts, sir.

24 JIM SCHWERTNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
25 Vice Chairman, Commissioners, General Weber, Ms. Carter,

1 it's a real pleasure to brief you today on the progress
2 of Texas Aviation Advisory Board and TxDOT Aviation. My
3 name's Jim Schwertner. I am currently the Chairman of
4 TxDOT Aviation Advisory Board.

5 TxDOT Aviation has a storied history
6 starting out in 1945; that was the age of aviation
7 coming of age. Texas realized that aviation was very
8 important to the state of Texas and so the legislature
9 approved the Texas Aeronautical Commission in 1945, and
10 that lasted till 1989. And then in 1989, the
11 legislature decided to have their new department, Texas
12 Aviation -- Department of Aviation.

13 Then in 1991, I think wisely so, they
14 decided we should be under the purview of TxDOT because
15 you folks are in business of transportation, and
16 aviation is transportation. It's dynamically changed
17 TxDOT Aviation as we know it today because we're under
18 your purview. Thank you, very much.

19 You might not know this, but TxDOT Aviation
20 has a storied history. On February the 20th of 1968
21 TxDOT Aeronautical Commission awarded Southwest Airlines
22 a Certificate of Operation, which we're all very proud
23 of. Think about that. The largest airline on the
24 planet started right here in this room. You guys should
25 be proud of that.

1 And then two years ago, on April the 1st,
2 2013 Governor Perry asked the Commission to appropriate
3 \$9 million for one year to facilitate all the control
4 towers to stay open in Texas. Now, let me tell you why
5 that's such a big deal.

6 Most corporate aviation fleets and airlines
7 cannot land at airports that do not have a control
8 tower. Because the Obama sequestration, all those
9 towers were going to be closed. They were Lone Star
10 Executive, Georgetown Airport, Dallas Executive, San
11 Antonio in Stinson, New Braunfels, Waco, San Marcos,
12 McKinney, Victoria, Brownsville, College Station,
13 Sugarland, Tyler, and Texarkana.

14 Think about that. Airlines would have to
15 stop if it wasn't for you folks stepping up to the plate
16 and giving \$9 million. By the way, you didn't have to
17 spend it. The Obama Administration blinked, thanks to
18 you folks. You should be very proud of that.

19 TxDOT Aviation Advisory Board was started
20 and established under Statute Number 30203, Texas
21 Administrative Code on September the 1st, 1991. There
22 were six members appointed by you to be on the Advisory
23 Aviation Committee.

24 Current members, some of whom are here
25 today, myself as Chairman, we have Mike Collier. Mike

1 please stand up. Mike is one of our longtime commission
2 -- board members. And John White -- John, please stand
3 up -- from San Antonio. John White is with Valero
4 Energy.

5 We have other members who are not here
6 today. Vice Chairman, Pete Huff, Gordon Richardson,
7 Mike Schnell. And then, of course, you know our
8 Executive Director, who is our leader, Dave Fulton. We
9 work with Dave every day to help advise you all on what
10 we need in the aviation system in Texas.

11 Members have five years -- the -- to be a
12 member you have to have five years of experience as an
13 aircraft pilot, or an aircraft facilities manager, or a
14 fixed-base operator. Committee members do not receive
15 any -- any compensation. We just do it out of labor of
16 love of aviation and to help the great state of Texas
17 facilitate their aviation system.

18 The Aviation Transportation Commission
19 establishes airports and projects and priorities, and
20 help you understand how to prepare Texas aviation system
21 for the future, and prepare for a multiyear capital
22 plan. Now, why is general aviation so important to this
23 great state of Texas. Well, the obvious reasons is
24 transportation, a thousand miles from Dalhart to McAllen
25 in a quick period of time.

1 There's so many remote airports in Texas
2 that does not have airline service. Without general
3 aviation, Texas wouldn't be the state it is today.
4 Economic impact of general aviation every year in Texas
5 is over \$14 billion, facilitates over 56,600 jobs,
6 totaling \$3.1 billion in labor income.

7 Now, Chairman Lewis, in Midland/Odessa, the
8 economic impact of your town is -- for general aviation
9 is \$57 million, creating 435 jobs and a labor income of
10 \$20 million.

11 Commissioner Austin, in Tyler, the economic
12 impact to you, sir, for general aviation is 13.2
13 million, creates 142 jobs and the economic labor impact
14 is 4.8.

15 Commissioner Bugg, San Antonio Stinson, the
16 economic impact for your town, at that one airport, is
17 23.9 million, creating 240 jobs -- 240 jobs and economic
18 impact of 8.9 million; and that does not count
19 San Antonio International.

20 Commissioner Moseley, Sugarland Regional
21 economic impact is 38.4 million to your region, created
22 253 jobs, \$16 million in labor income. And I might add,
23 that's one of the most impressive FBOs that I've ever
24 landed at. Whatever you folks did to make that happen,
25 I tip my hat to you, sir.

1 Commissioner Vandergriff, Arlington
2 Municipal Airport, the economic impact for your airport,
3 sir, is \$57 million, creates 435 jobs, labor income is
4 \$20 million.

5 So you can see what a huge impact it is for
6 all the regions in the state of Texas. There are over
7 304 system airports in Texas. Think about that; 304
8 airports that you gentlemen manage through your
9 appropriations and through the leadership of Dave
10 Fulton.

11 There are 51,000 licensed pilots in Texas.
12 There are 29,200 active registered aircraft that are
13 based in Texas; general aviation, this is not counting
14 air carriers. The annual flight operations in Texas is
15 staggering; 8.5 sorties or missions a year in the state
16 of Texas, not counting air carriers.

17 If you don't think general aviation's a big
18 deal in Texas, look at some of the Fortune 500 companies
19 in Texas that depend their whole livelihood on general
20 aviation. You've got Valero Energy who has three Gulf
21 Stream 650s.

22 JOHN WHITE: Five.

23 JIM SCHWERTNER: Five. Sorry about that.
24 John White represents them. We've got McCoy Building
25 Supply right in San Marcos, Texas that has numerous

1 corporate airplanes based in San Marcos. Zachry
2 Construction, who we all know is a proud Aggie, I might
3 add, has corporate air crafts flying in and out of Texas
4 every day to facilitate their company. Then, of course,
5 our pride and joy of Texas, San Antonio, H-E-B.

6 Why is this so important? Well, Sam Walton
7 said it all, when he was alive, with Wal-Mart. If you
8 do not have an airport in your town, Wal-Mart is not
9 coming. Think about that. Mr. Zachry stated his
10 company would have to change the business model in his
11 company if they did not have corporate aviation on the
12 Texas aviation system.

13 Now I'd like to give you a personal story.
14 My company is the largest livestock brokerage company in
15 the United States of America. We rely heavily on
16 general aviation. I'm currently a pilot myself, been
17 flying for 50 years. Our corporate fleet is very
18 important to what we do in our business, traveling in
19 and out of Texas, working with farmers and ranchers in
20 Texas and all of the United States.

21 Without corporate aviation and all the
22 airports that you guys helped to fund, we couldn't be in
23 business. So thank you, very much. The airport
24 investment in Texas from 1991 to 2015 has been 1.3
25 billion. Now, a lot of that money comes from the

1 federal government but then the state of Texas
2 appropriates some of it, too. And so we want to thank
3 you, very much.

4 Now, I wanted to show you what's changed
5 since Dave Fulton -- and I'm going to embarrass Dave
6 here in just a minute. He doesn't know I'm doing this,
7 but I also own live stock options in Navasota and
8 Lockhart. We've had auctions in Hondo. We've had
9 auctions in Belton. At Karnes City and Pleasanton. And
10 I can tell you the airport system was in shambles in
11 Texas before Dave Fulton showed up in 1991.

12 This is what it looks like in -- before
13 1991. It was terrible for the state of Texas to have
14 this kind of infrastructure. But thanks to Dave Fulton,
15 we've changed it. This is what it looks like today.
16 From 1945 to 1991, 46 years, Texas only invested 1.4
17 million with a total of 64 million use, which is a lot
18 to facilitate these airports.

19 After Dave showed up and convinced you how
20 important the aviation system is, from 1991 to 2015, a
21 period of 24 years, Texas has invested \$54 million. To
22 date, are -- are -- this year are 1.3 billion total from
23 the state -- federal grants and the state of Texas.

24 Thank you, Dave.

25 Now, what do you do with all this money that

1 you're appropriating? Well, you can see Sugarland
2 airport right up there, all those corporate jets. I
3 tell you, that's the new use of hobby. All the
4 corporate Fortune 500 oil companies go there. They
5 invest in -- you invest in runways, taxiways, control
6 towers, hangars, fuel forms, and weather systems to help
7 facilitate the aviation system.

8 But let me tell you a little secret that you
9 guys have that most states don't understand. You make
10 each town have skin in the game, which is important.
11 Every town that agrees to invest a new infrastructure at
12 their community has to match you guys at least 10
13 percent of what you appropriate.

14 Give you an example, Georgetown airport. We
15 need a tower very bad where I'm based. The tower costs
16 \$1.2 million. The city counsel of Georgetown stepped up
17 to appropriate their 10 percent to show you that they
18 were 100 percent behind this project.

19 So because of the formula that you have,
20 every community, including Sugarland, sir, stepped up.
21 I think Sugarland theirselves stepped up to about \$9
22 million. So you should be commended on the formula that
23 you established. Now, under the direction of Jay
24 Joseph, who is not here today, who is a former Blue
25 Angel, TxDOT Flight Service is nationally recognized as

1 a model department of the whole world.

2 TxDOT Aviation through TxDOT maintains 45
3 state owned aircraft and helicopters, providing air
4 transportation services for the State officials
5 including the governor, you, and all State officials
6 that need to get to Point A to Point B safely and
7 quickly, and I might add, cheaply.

8 The State maintenance facility, which is out
9 at Bergstrom, this is a picture of it here, does amazing
10 work. While I was on the Board of Regents Texas A&M, I
11 got to see firsthand how they maintain these aircraft.
12 They also maintain University of Texas aircraft, Texas
13 A&M aircraft, DPS, Parks and Wildlife, on and on.

14 Also because of the lack of funding from the
15 federal government, you gentlemen, through TxDOT
16 Aviation and the Maintenance Division, has maintained
17 all of DPS's aircraft including their helicopters.
18 They're doing the job that our federal government should
19 be doing, General, controlling the Rio Grande border.

20 And every one of these aircraft are getting
21 100-hour inspections at least every two weeks because of
22 the heavy flying that they're doing. You have some of
23 the best mechanics and maintenance managers that I've
24 ever seen in my life. You should be commended. We have
25 a great safety record in this department. Over 31

1 years, they have flown over 65,600 hours incident or
2 accident free. No air carrier on the planet can say
3 that.

4 But we have an aging fleet. It's over 28
5 years old. Let me tell you why I bring this up. Being
6 a pilot and aviator myself for over 50 years, the number
7 one thing you have as a pilot, you're concerned about
8 the safety of your crew and your passengers from getting
9 Point A to Point B. And when you have an aging fleet,
10 you need to make sure that you have the latest and
11 greatest technology.

12 My hope is that you will ask the legislature
13 this next session to appropriate some money for some new
14 aircraft to transport the governor and other State
15 leaders, including yourself, around the state of Texas.
16 Now let me give you a personal story. And I'm not
17 giving you this story to brag about me or my company.
18 It's a true life story that you need to know about,
19 because it's important.

20 When I was on the Board of Regents two years
21 ago, I got a call one Sunday night from our president of
22 the medical school, Dr. (Indiscernible) said, Jim,
23 there's a lady, a nurse in Dallas that is dying from
24 Ebola. We found an experimental vaccine in Kentucky.
25 We need an aircraft to go right now to pick that drug up

1 and fly it back to Dallas. If we don't, she may die.

2 Well, how can I help, sir? Said well, TxDOT
3 nor A&M has an aircraft that can climb over the weather
4 between here and Kentucky. There was a big front coming
5 through, tops were at 38,000 feet. So, sir, would you
6 or your company volunteer your airplane. Said
7 absolutely. So we left at midnight.

8 We flew into Kentucky, picked up the
9 vaccine, were back in Dallas at 8:00. I was honored to
10 do that, and I think maybe we saved the lady's life.
11 Later on, though, my wife and my friends actually said,
12 why doesn't the State of Texas have equipment, and why
13 do they have to rely on private citizens to help out,
14 which I was honored to do. I think that's a great
15 question.

16 In the great state of Texas, we should have
17 the latest and greatest technology no matter what we do.
18 And I believe it's time, when you have an aviation fleet
19 that's over 28 years old, to refurbish to keep your
20 governor and your state officials safe.

21 One other thing that TxDOT has done that I'm
22 very proud of, the Aviation Division, at 9/11 there were
23 no aircraft flying for two weeks in the United States of
24 America except two aircraft. They were TxDOT's two King
25 Airs. TxDOT was the only agency allowed, besides the

1 military, to fly in the whole United States of America
2 because they had clearance through FEMA to fly their
3 employees to and from Washington D.C. and New York.

4 Think about that; only the State of Texas
5 could step up to the plate and answer the call. We also
6 stepped up during Hurricane Ike. When Hurricane Ike
7 came, TxDOT was called on to ferry FEMA and other
8 federal and state agencies back and forth to Houston and
9 Galveston, when no one else could, to make sure we kept
10 our citizens safe.

11 So, Commissioners, you can see how important
12 TxDOT Aviation is to your Committee and to this great
13 state of Texas. And finally, General Weber, I would
14 like to thank you for your service as the Executive
15 Director of TxDOT, but also serving the United States
16 Marine Corps, your storied history as retired general,
17 and also Vice President of Student Affairs of Texas A&M.

18 I've watched you from afar. You've
19 taught me a lot and you've touched many young lives,
20 including your troops while you were in the Marines, and
21 also all these young leaders that you've developed at
22 Texas A&M and the State of Texas as TxDOT Director.
23 You're going to go down in history as one of the
24 strongest leaders this state's ever seen. Thank you,
25 very much, for your service, sir. Thank you.

1 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much, for your
2 remarks, Chairman. Are there any questions of Chairman
3 Schwertner at this time? Commissioner Bugg?

4 MR. BUGG: Mr. Schwertner, first of all,
5 thank you for your service.

6 JIM SCHWERTNER: Thank you, sir.

7 MR. BUGG: And also want to thank you for
8 those kind remarks about General Weber. Very well
9 deserved. My question to you is, I hear what you're
10 saying about the aging aircraft. Do you have a specific
11 proposal that you've developed on exactly what you think
12 we should be considering? And if you haven't, could you
13 and -- and submit some kind of proposal on what kind of
14 equipment you think the state of Texas needs, and -- and
15 try to cost that out --

16 JIM SCHWERTNER: Absolutely.

17 MR. BUGG: -- come back to us.

18 JIM SCHWERTNER: I was -- I have been
19 Chairman before this Committee, before I was appointed
20 on the A&M Board of Regents, and we did a study in 2007
21 or 8, we need to pull it back out. At the time, we had
22 Governor Perry and Commissioner Holmes on board. They
23 were this close to making a change and then the economy
24 fell out a bit. So we've got to refurbish the report
25 but, yes, sir, we can get back to you.

1 We -- we know pretty well what we need. But
2 again, it's all about safety. You know, there are some
3 people that have this vision about, well, you just want
4 to fly Commissioners, Governor around. You know, that's
5 not -- that's not the idea here. It's to help you
6 expedite efficiently to do your job in a safe manner to
7 get you back home so we don't have to buy you a hotel
8 room.

9 MR. BUGG: I appreciate that. But from a
10 safety standpoint, that's why I'd like to hear --

11 JIM SCHWERTNER: Yes, sir.

12 MR. BUGG: -- on that.

13 JIM SCHWERTNER: We'll get you one, sir.

14 MR. BUGG: Thank you.

15 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. And I think
16 Commissioner Austin? Or who hasn't -- Vice Chair,
17 Moseley?

18 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman Schwertner, thank you
19 for this report, and job well done. Thank you for the
20 Advisory Committee Service. I would just echo what
21 Commissioner Bugg had asked for, if there's an
22 opportunity for you as Advisory Committee --

23 JIM SCHWERTNER: Yes, sir.

24 MR. MOSELEY: -- to advise us on a next
25 generation of fleet. I think that would be extremely

1 useful. Governor Abbott's done a very wonderful job of
2 reminding us that Texas is really a leader in the United
3 States. And in leading the United States, we're leading
4 the world, so it seems like we should have the kind of
5 equipment that would serve the leadership of the state.

6 JIM SCHWERTNER: Yes, sir.

7 MR. MOSELEY: You made a very good point
8 about the safety as well, so I'd be very pleased to hear
9 if your Committee could bring that forward --

10 JIM SCHWERTNER: We'll get that done for
11 you, sir, and I'll be willing, along with Dave Fulton,
12 to brief any one of you privately if you'd like also.

13 MR. MOSELEY: I think we probably have
14 looked at the fleet as a very important tool to serve
15 the state, but we're seeing the value of that fleet
16 needing to go beyond the borders of the state just like
17 you described. And so that's --

18 JIM SCHWERTNER: And protect our citizens.

19 MR. MOSELEY: Yeah.

20 JIM SCHWERTNER: Yes, sir.

21 MR. MOSELEY: So I would agree with --

22 JIM SCHWERTNER: Thank you, sir.

23 MR. MOSELEY: Your comments. Thank you.

24 MR. AUSTIN: Mr. Chairman, welcome back.

25 JIM SCHWERTNER: Thank you, sir.

1 MR. AUSTIN: Happy --

2 JIM SCHWERTNER: Pleasure.

3 MR. AUSTIN: -- to see y'all here. There's
4 one thing I wish I would've done different before this
5 meeting, is make sure former Commissioner Fred Underwood
6 would dial in. And I hope he's present watching this
7 because --

8 JIM SCHWERTNER: Well --

9 MR. AUSTIN: -- his love of aviation is near
10 and dear, and as a pilot, I know he would greatly
11 welcome y'all's presentation.

12 JIM SCHWERTNER: Well, thank you, sir.
13 Fred's a dear friend of mine, and he was really one of
14 the people that encouraged me to be on the Texas
15 Aviation Advisory Board my first term, so thank you,
16 very much.

17 MR. AUSTIN: You made a comment two years
18 ago when we were faced with a shutdown, what would
19 happen to the airports. And we did step up to the
20 governor's call --

21 JIM SCHWERTNER: Yes, you did.

22 MR. AUSTIN: -- and we made funds available.
23 We had that similar discussion given what has or has not
24 -- what was not going to happen federally. We got word
25 that FAA would stay open. But our federal team was on

1 top of this ready to act, if we needed to --

2 JIM SCHWERTNER: Yes, sir.

3 MR. AUSTIN: We want to stand ready to. But
4 304 airports. When you look at this, one thing that you
5 didn't touch on was the freight component of these
6 airports. There's a lot of businesses that are shipping
7 goods in and out, moving people, other than the
8 commercial airports. And this does illustrate that we
9 are a multi-model state and a multi-model department.

10 JIM SCHWERTNER: Yes, sir.

11 MR. AUSTIN: To keep Texas flying, you guys
12 do a great job. I've had discussions and I've heard
13 comments back and forth outside the agency suggesting
14 when are y'all going to modernize your fleet for safety.
15 28 years old, you know. When's the last time we
16 replaced a grader or an ambulance or things like that,
17 to go back and make sure we have good equipment.

18 But the one thing that resonates with me,
19 too, one, if other agencies or departments in the state
20 use this, we are reimbursed for that.

21 JIM SCHWERTNER: Absolutely.

22 MR. AUSTIN: And that's why I want to make
23 sure that's not just for a convenience for us because it
24 doesn't happen.

25 JIM SCHWERTNER: Absolutely.

1 MR. AUSTIN: But we are reimbursed. And I
2 feel y'all are one of the most profitable divisions
3 in --

4 JIM SCHWERTNER: Well --

5 MR. AUSTIN: -- TxDOT.

6 JIM SCHWERTNER: -- you're touching on
7 something, Commissioner Austin that Dave Fulton kind
8 of --

9 MR. AUSTIN: He's pretty tight.

10 JIM SCHWERTNER: Well, also, he kind of --
11 kind of would be because I was -- I was working with him
12 at TxDOT Aviation before I got on the Board of Regents
13 at A&M. And I thought every agency worked for a profit,
14 and I found out different when I got to A&M. He's
15 spoiled me, and I've given him a hard time about that.

16 But you are correct, we -- we sell every
17 seat. Nobody rides for free. If the governor rides,
18 his -- is department pays. If you guys ride, you have
19 to have a mission, you got to sign an affidavit of what
20 you're doing. People don't just jump in these
21 airplanes.

22 So it's all about safety and taking care of
23 -- also, I need to add, Commissioner Austin, the reason
24 this is so important to talk to you folks about this,
25 you are the most powerful agency in the state of Texas.

1 Sometimes you don't realize that.

2 But because of your budget and what you do
3 for Transportation, if not you, who? And that's why I'm
4 leaning on you so hard about really thinking about
5 addressing this issue because it is a safety issue and
6 we need to address it before someone gets hurt.

7 MR. AUSTIN: Dave -- I appreciate your
8 comments and thank you. Dave and I have had a couple
9 conversations about -- he's been up here, we visited,
10 talking about this potential investment. And while you
11 look at this, one argument, say, oh, you're buying --
12 you're replacing your fleet. But if you look at it
13 today, what's more fuel efficient, what's more
14 economical, and safety.

15 And he made a compelling argument, saying
16 our maintenance costs of refurbishing is going up at a
17 faster rate --

18 JIM SCHWERTNER: Right.

19 MR. AUSTIN: -- than it would be to maintain
20 and operate. So the return on investment of doing that
21 would be really, really phenomenal and actually save a
22 lot of money going forward.

23 JIM SCHWERTNER: Well, I could tell you
24 firsthand, my company has done that. We had aging
25 fleet. We changed it over, paid for itself in three

1 years in fuel and maintenance savings. So I know
2 firsthand that it works.

3 MR. AUSTIN: So back to Commissioner Bugg's
4 question, when y'all make that case, would you show
5 why --

6 JIM SCHWERTNER: We'll have you one --

7 MR. AUSTIN: -- that would be plausible --

8 JIM SCHWERTNER: We'll have you one real
9 soon, sir.

10 MR. AUSTIN: -- out of understanding.

11 JIM SCHWERTNER: I understand.

12 MR. AUSTIN: But thank y'all for what you do
13 in --in keeping Texas flying.

14 JIM SCHWERTNER: Thank you for what you all
15 do.

16 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much, Chairman.
17 Appreciate you and -- and -- and the service of all your
18 family. You've been a great asset to the state of
19 Texas.

20 JIM SCHWERTNER: Thank you, sir.

21 MR. LEWIS: And we have another card. John
22 White, been introduced to us, but if you'd please come
23 up, and state your name, and who you're here
24 representing, then give us the benefit of your remarks.

25 JOHN WHITE: Yeah. My name's John White and

1 I'm Vice President of Aviation for Valero Energy,
2 headquartered in -- in Commissioner Bugg's hometown,
3 San Antonio, Texas. And I'm representing TxDOT Aviation
4 here today.

5 Primarily -- I'll be very brief -- I'm here
6 to thank you all Commissioners, and Chairman, and
7 General Weber, for my reappointment to the committee. I
8 think that through Dave and his -- and TxDOT Aviation
9 they do very good work for the state.

10 I also -- I won't say it as well as my
11 friend Jim Schwertner did, but I've also been very
12 impressed with the way that TxDOT Aviation runs it
13 business. I was just -- I've just been blown away by
14 that. And I'm very appreciative of their impartment and
15 also for the years of support of TxDOT Aviation. They
16 -- they truly do keep general aviation flying, and that
17 drives economic growth in the state of Texas. Thank
18 you, very much.

19 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. Just a second, Mr.
20 White. We have any questions?

21 MR. AUSTIN: I want to say thank you, very
22 much, for your service. And what you help bring is a
23 blend of corporate, private FBO. And you look at the
24 diversity on the Advisory Board, y'all do a great job.
25 With that, Mr. Chairman, as we look at the Advisory

1 Commission, this is set statutorily by the legislature.
2 We have some private advisory groups and working groups
3 that we can increase, decrease, but that is set by the
4 legislature.

5 And one thing, Senator Huffines' on the
6 Transportation Committee, like to ask that y'all
7 consider bringing that authority back to TxDOT. For
8 example, if we wanted to increase that to nine to make
9 sure we have more representation, that would be
10 something we would ask y'all to consider bringing that
11 back to us. Thank you, very much, for your service.

12 JOHN WHITE: All right. Thank you.

13 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much, Mr. White.
14 General.

15 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Dave and all
16 Advisory Committee members for what you do for us. Next
17 up is item 4, appoint a new member to the Port Authority
18 Advisory Committee and our Maritime Division Director
19 Dan Harmon will present. Dan.

20 DAN HARMON: Morning. Thank you, sir.
21 Morning, Mr. Chairman, Vice, Commissioners, General
22 Weber. Good morning. For the record, my name is Dan
23 Harmon. I'm the Director of the TxDOT Maritime
24 Division.

25 This minute order is to appoint Mr. Mike

1 Mierzwa from the port of Galveston, Texas to a
2 three-year term on the Port Authority Advisory
3 Committee. He'll be replacing Mr. Glen Carlson from the
4 port of Freeport. Mr. Mierzwa meets the statutory
5 requirements for service, and staff recommends approval.

6 MR. LEWIS: Commissioners, are there any
7 questions for Director Harmon at this time?

8 MR. MOSELEY: Is Captain Mierzwa here today?

9 DAN HARMON: He is not.

10 MR. MOSELEY: Okay.

11 DAN HARMON: He was unable to attend.

12 MR. LEWIS: If there are no further
13 questions, or comments, or remarks, Vice Chair Moseley,
14 do you move to appoint the new member in accordance with
15 staff's --

16 MR. MOSELEY: So moved --

17 MR. LEWIS: -- recommendation?

18 MR. MOSELEY: -- Chairman.

19 MR. LEWIS: And, Mr. Vandergriff, do you
20 second?

21 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

22 MR. LEWIS: No further discussion, we'll
23 have our vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

24 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

25 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. The motion

1 carries. Thank you, sir.

2 DAN HARMON: Thank you, sir.

3 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Dan. Next is item
4 5, our aviation state grant funding. Our Aviation
5 Division Director Dave Fulton will present. Dave.

6 DAVE FULTON: My name's Dave Fulton,
7 Director of TxDOT's Aviation Division. This minute
8 order contains a request for grant funding approval for
9 two airport improvement projects. The total estimated
10 cost of the request, as shown in Exhibit A, is
11 approximately \$1.2 million; approximately \$600,000 in
12 state funds, \$600,000 in local funds.

13 A public hearing was held on October 1st.
14 No comments were received. We would recommend approval
15 of this minute order.

16 MR. LEWIS: Are there any questions for
17 Director Fulton at this time?

18 DAVE FULTON: I think -- wasn't there some
19 representatives from the city of Cotulla here?

20 MR. LEWIS: I don't have any yellow cards.
21 Are -- are there -- does anyone -- if anyone wishes to
22 speak on this matter and didn't fill out a yellow card,
23 do we have any?

24 DAVE FULTON: They informed us they would be
25 here.

1 MR. LEWIS: Well, thank you. If not, if --
2 let's see -- Commissioner Vandergriff, do you move to
3 award state grant funding for airport improvement
4 projects at the locations mentioned in accordance with
5 staff recommendations?

6 MR. VANDERGRIFF: So moved.

7 MR. LEWIS: And, Mr. Bugg, do you second?

8 MR. BUGG: Second. Thank you.

9 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. We have a motion to
10 second. If no discussion, see to a vote on the favor
11 say, "Aye."

12 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

13 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Thank you,
14 sir.

15 GENERAL WEBER: Next is item 6(a), the award
16 of our federal funds and Transportation development
17 credits. Public Transportation Division Director Eric
18 Gleason will present. Eric.

19 ERIC GLEASON: Good morning. For the
20 record, I'm Eric Gleason, TxDOT Director of Public
21 Transportation. Agenda item 6(a) awards for remaining
22 grant program balances for two SAFETEA-LU program
23 subsequently consolidated with other formal programs
24 under MAP-21.

25 Between 2006 and 2012, Texas received \$64

1 million in federal discretionary grant program funding
2 from these programs to assist low income individuals
3 with work related transportation needs and improving
4 mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities.
5 Remaining program balances totalling \$438,000 are
6 awarded to five sub-recipients for joint efforts in
7 these areas to ensure timely expenditure remaining
8 program funds.

9 Exhibit "A" of this recommended award
10 recipients, amounts, and transportation development
11 credits to be used in lieu of local matches needed.
12 Staff recommends your approval of this new rule.

13 MR. LEWIS: Commissioners, are there any
14 questions of Director Gleason with regard to this
15 matter? Commissioner Austin.

16 MR. AUSTIN: Eric, y'all do a really good
17 job of identifying coming back out, and I just wanted to
18 follow up. How do we go back and make sure that the
19 grants that we provide to the various entities that
20 they're spent in accordance with the terms of the grant?

21 ERIC GLEASON: We routinely and regularly
22 monitor expenditures, not only on a monthly basis but
23 reimbursement requests on a quarterly basis. We go in
24 and check the percentage of the line items that we've
25 been billed for. We -- there are annual and biannual

1 reviews that take place, and we are in constant contact
2 with those sub-recipients to ensure that.

3 MR. AUSTIN: So this happens on a pretty
4 frequent basis?

5 ERIC GLEASON: Yes, sir.

6 MR. AUSTIN: And what happens if they're not
7 supplying data to us, or they're not giving us the right
8 information, or they can't justify the expenditures?

9 ERIC GLEASON: The process -- when we
10 discover that -- that we have issues like that, we issue
11 the sub recipient what is known as an improvement action
12 plan. And they sign it, and it is -- it is a task that
13 they undertake to bring their program back into
14 compliance over an agreed upon amount of time.

15 And as we encounter these kinds of issues
16 with sub recipients, we do have the ability to put them
17 on a higher level of scrutiny than, say, a sub recipient
18 for which we have no issues. So we have kind of a
19 graduated program, if you will, of scrutiny that says if
20 you're having issues then we're going to look more
21 closely. If you're not having issues, then you'll get
22 -- you know, you'll get our routine level.

23 MR. AUSTIN: Are there circumstances that
24 could exist that we may ask for reimbursement and then
25 kind of --

1 ERIC GLEASON: Yes, sir.

2 MR. AUSTIN: What implication does that have
3 on the agency with the Federal Transit Authority, or the
4 federal funds that we -- do we have to give that
5 money -- give it back or...

6 ERIC GLEASON: So when we encounter issues,
7 and if we identify funds that need to be reimbursed, we
8 proceed to get that refund from the sub recipient. As
9 the designated recipient for these programs, the federal
10 programs, the risk always exists that with that kind of
11 situation, the Federal Transit Administration could seek
12 reimbursement from us. And so we are in constant
13 contact with them when we have these situations.

14 MR. AUSTIN: So, hypothetically, the one
15 entity that doesn't meet the restriction can't justify
16 it, we seek reimbursement. We can't get it, FTA could
17 ask us to reimburse them, but we'd be out that -- that
18 money.

19 ERIC GLEASON: They could make that choice,
20 yes, sir.

21 MR. AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks for that
22 clarification. Please continue to follow up with these
23 to make sure we minimize our --

24 ERIC GLEASON: Yes.

25 MR. AUSTIN: -- risk of approval.

1 ERIC GLEASON: Thank you.

2 MR. LEWIS: Vice Chair Moseley --

3 MR. MOSELEY: Second.

4 MR. LEWIS: -- do you have a question or
5 comment?

6 MR. MOSELEY: Oh, no.

7 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. We do have a motion
8 and second. Any other questions or comments from the
9 Commission? All in favor please say, "Aye."

10 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

11 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Thank you,
12 very much.

13 GENERAL WEBER: Eric, please continue with
14 item 6(b), the award transportation development credits
15 to the City of Tyler.

16 ERIC GLEASON: Thank you. This minute order
17 awards approximately 30,000 transportation development
18 credits to the City of Tyler to allow them to draw down
19 \$146,500 in federal transit administration 5310 program
20 funding previously approved by this Commission for the
21 purchase of a bus and radios to improve dispatching and
22 communication efforts.

23 Commission approved that Section 5310
24 program funds to the City of Tyler at the July 2015
25 meeting for the above purposes. Subsequent to that

1 action, we received a request for transportation
2 developments from the city. The Commission has
3 routinely awarded TDCs for use in lieu of match for
4 these kinds of projects, and we recommend your approval
5 on this minute order.

6 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. Any questions for
7 Director Gleason with regard to this matter? If not, do
8 we have a motion to approve the award of transportation
9 development credits?

10 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

11 MR. MOSELEY: Second.

12 MR. LEWIS: Okay. So we have a motion to
13 approve these credits and a second. Any discussion? If
14 not, all in favor say, "Aye."

15 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

16 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Motion
17 carries.

18 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Eric. Next is item
19 7(a), proposed adoption of amendments to Chapter 10, the
20 Ethical Conduct by Entities Doing Business with the
21 Department. Chief Audit & Compliance Officer Benny
22 Ybarra will present.

23 BENNY YBARRA: Thank you. Good morning.
24 For the record, I am Benny Ybarra, Chief Audit &
25 Compliance Officer. This minute order remains Title 43,

1 Texas Administrative Code Section 10.6 related to
2 conflicts of interest and is recommended for final
3 adoption.

4 Senate Bill 20 of the 84th Texas Legislative
5 Session added restrictions on the employment of certain
6 former State employees. Proposed amendments to Section
7 10.6 expand the existing definition of conflicts of
8 interest for entities doing business with the
9 Department.

10 This includes an entity that hires a former
11 Department employee who participated on behalf of the
12 Department in an original award of procurement or
13 contract negotiation involving that entity within two
14 years after the employee leaves the Department.

15 The definition applies to entities awarded a
16 procurement with a prime contractor or an equity partner
17 of the prime contractor. It's a contract awarded under
18 a low bid process. The amendments apply to Department
19 employees who played an active part in the original
20 procurement or contract negotiations by performing a
21 materially relevant steps and whose participation
22 occurred on or after September 1, 2015.

23 The Commission, by minute order 114314 dated July 30,
24 2015, proposed these amendments. Public comments were
25 received, and no changes were made to the proposed text

1 published in the Texas Register. Staff recommends
2 approval of this minute order.

3 MR. LEWIS: Commissioners, are there
4 questions of Mr. Ybarra? Go ahead, Vice Chairman
5 Moseley.

6 MR. MOSELEY: Thank you for this update.
7 And the comment says the bill states a former employee
8 may not be hired by a contractor if he or she
9 participated in a procurement, and I assume that's the
10 definition of participating as materially relevant where
11 the action provides an opportunity to steer a contract;
12 is that correct?

13 BENNY YBARRA: Correct, sir.

14 MR. MOSELEY: Thank you.

15 BENNY YBARRA: Yep.

16 MR. LEWIS: Commissioner Austin, do you have
17 a question?

18 MR. AUSTIN: Benny, thank y'all for doing
19 this. I understand the intent of SB 20, not to be
20 confused with House Bill 20. There's a lot of 20s. But
21 this will have an impact on future employment for those
22 who come into the agency or those that are here right
23 now looking to leave.

24 And I just think it's worth noting, Chairs,
25 as we look at one executive director going forward.

1 This could have an impact on making sure we fully
2 disclose everything that's happened with this. But
3 also, our strategic plan that exist shows long tenured
4 employees, and I just want to be careful that -- we need
5 to be aware that we could have a brain drain of losing a
6 lot of folks that seek to go into private industry.

7 And we need to make sure we are continuing
8 to attract and retain new talent. But our agency is
9 unlike a lot of others where there are a lot of
10 contracts with a lot of impact to a lot of companies
11 that our folks do, unlike other agencies. So, thank
12 you, Benny.

13 BENNY YBARRA: Yep, you're welcome.

14 MR. LEWIS: Let's see. Any other questions
15 of our auditor, Mr. Ybarra, at this time? If not,
16 Commissioner Bugg, do you move to approve final adoption
17 of these amendments to Section 10.6 conflict of interest
18 section in accordance with the staff recommendation?

19 MR. BUGG: I so move.

20 MR. LEWIS: And, Commissioner Vandergriff,
21 do you second?

22 MR. VANDERGRIFF: I do.

23 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and second.
24 Any other comments from anyone? Any other discussion?
25 If not, we have a motion and second. We'll proceed to a

1 vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

2 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

3 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. The motion
4 carries. Thank you.

5 BENNY YBARRA: Thank you.

6 MR. LEWIS: Talking about visiting
7 dignitaries, I just got a note that Chairman Picket came
8 in, but I don't see -- is Chairman Picket here? Back
9 there somewhere. Oh, back in the back. Okay. We'll
10 see him later, and if he wishes to address us, we can
11 certainly do that. General, back to you.

12 GENERAL WEBER: Next is item 7(b)(1),
13 proposed amendments to Chapter 9, Contract and Grant
14 Management. Our Director of Right of Way, John
15 Campbell, will present. John.

16 JOHN CAMPBELL: Good morning. For the
17 record, my name's John Campbell, Director of the Right
18 of Way Division. Like to present for your consideration
19 item 7(b)(1) which provides -- provides for the proposed
20 adoption of amendments to 43 Texas Administrative Code
21 Chapter 9, subchapter "F" entitled "Contracts for
22 Scientific, Real Estate, Appraisal, Right of Way
23 Acquisition, and Landscape Architectural Services."

24 We're proposing amendments to Sections 9.81,
25 which are the Definitions; 9.83, the Notice and the

1 Letter of Interest; 9.85, the Provider Evaluations;
2 9.87, the Selection Criteria; 9.89, Qualification
3 Requirements for Appraisers relating to the contract of
4 the grant management.

5 These amendments respond to identify the
6 need to secure adequate capacity in contracting for
7 professional real estate appraisal and right of way
8 acquisition services. Specifically, we're proposing to
9 raise the contract limit under current existing
10 indefinite delivery contracts from a \$2 million cap to a
11 \$4 million cap.

12 We are also clarifying terms associated with
13 professional appraisal practice that are just outdated
14 and need to be updated to reflect current terminology
15 and use. Staff recommends your approval of the proposed
16 adoption of these rules.

17 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. Are there any
18 questions of Director Campbell at this time on this
19 subject matter? Mr. Austin, do you have a question?

20 MR. AUSTIN: Thank y'all for looking at this
21 because this has been a challenge in looking to try to
22 dispose of some property where when we're disposing a
23 property, an appraisal for disposition is different than
24 imminent domain. So what y'all are looking at in
25 clarifying a lot of this, thank you. I guess we're

1 going to expedite us getting rid of unwanted parcels.

2 JOHN CAMPBELL: Thank you.

3 MR. LEWIS: Any other questions? Then,
4 Commissioner Vandergriff, do you move to adopt the
5 proposal of amendments in accordance with staff
6 recommendations?

7 MR. VANDERGRIFF: So moved.

8 MR. LEWIS: And Vice Chair Moseley, you
9 second?

10 MR. MOSELEY: Second, yes, sir.

11 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and second. If
12 no further comment or remarks, then we'll proceed to a
13 vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

14 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

15 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Motion
16 carries. Thank you, very much, Mr. Campbell.

17 GENERAL WEBER: Next is item 7(b)(2),
18 proposed new sections to Chapter 30 Aviation. Our
19 Director of Aviation, Dave Fulton.

20 DAVE FULTON: Again, for the record, my
21 name's Dave Fulton, Director of TxDOT's Aviation
22 Division. This item is for proposed new rules that
23 implement Senate Bill 505 of the 84th Legislature. The
24 rules establish the Department as the registrant for
25 meteorological towers, commonly called "mets," meeting

1 the definition found in Transportation Code Section
2 21071.

3 Prior to selecting a geographical location
4 for wind energy generating turbines, small towers are
5 erected and equipped with sensors designed to collect
6 weather data. These data are then used to determine if
7 the location has adequate potential to make the
8 construction of wind turbine generators economically
9 viable.

10 The increasing prevalence of mets has caused
11 concern for the National Transportation Safety Board and
12 the federal Aviation Administration. Because the mets
13 are typically less than 200 feet tall and located in
14 remote locations, notification to the FAA is not
15 required. Without a means to collect and distribute
16 information on these towers, aircraft operators are
17 unaware of their existence or location.

18 Operators of agriculture, medical response,
19 and pipeline aircraft typically fly at altitudes less
20 than 200 feet above ground level. Because these towers
21 are not mapped or marked for visibility, pilots are
22 unable to see and avoid them. This rule will provide a
23 mechanism to collect and disseminate location
24 information to those air craft operators and inform
25 owners of mets of their responsibility to paint and mark

1 existing and proposed towers.

2 The Department will establish a web based
3 registration and reporting system to easily allow met
4 owners a means to report tower location information and
5 aircraft operators a means to locate previously
6 unreported towers. We would recommend approval of this
7 minute order.

8 MR. LEWIS: Commissioners, any questions at
9 this time of Director Fulton? If not, Vice Chair
10 Moseley, do you move to approve the adoption of the new
11 Sections 30.500 and to 503 in accordance with staff
12 recommendations?

13 MR. MOSELEY: So moved, chairman.

14 MR. LEWIS: And, Commissioner Austin, do you
15 second?

16 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

17 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and second. If
18 there's not discussion, we'll proceed to a vote. All in
19 favor say, "Aye."

20 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

21 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Thank you,
22 very much.

23 DAVE FULTON: Thank you.

24 GENERAL WEBER: Next is item 8(a), sections
25 of our Quarterly Investment Report. Innovative Finance

1 & Debt Management officer Ben Asher will present.

2 BEN ASHER: Thank you, General. Good
3 morning, Chairman, Commissioners. For the record, I'm
4 Ben Asher, Innovative Finance & Debt Management officer
5 here at TxDOT. Item 8(a) is to consider acceptance by
6 the Commission of the Quarterly Investment Report for
7 the Central Texas Turnpike, or CTTS System, as it is
8 known.

9 The Quarterly Investment Report is prepared
10 and submitted quarterly to comply with the requirements
11 of the Public Funds Investment Act and with the
12 Commission's investment policies. I want to briefly
13 highlight some of the report for the period ending
14 August 31, 2015.

15 CTT's investments held by the trustee are
16 managed by TxDOT, while the other funds and bond
17 proceeds from our other debt programs are managed by the
18 Controller. Our investment approach with regards to CS
19 is guided by the Public Funds Investment Act and our
20 investment policy with our strategy based on the
21 following tenants in order of priority, and that
22 priority is safety of principal, liquidity, and then
23 finally, yield.

24 At the bottom of page 4 of the report this
25 strategy is further outlined. As you're aware, interest

1 rates are at -- remain at historic lows. And as a
2 result, we've kept investments generally from maturity
3 at less than one year. This approach will enable us to
4 be in an position to obtain incremental higher returns
5 whenever the Fed chooses to increase its federal funds
6 rate.

7 Also on page 4 are some of the key benchmark
8 interest rates that we use as a comparison to investment
9 results that are summarized on the following page. On
10 the following page, or page 5, the current investments
11 are listed. This diversified portfolio resulted
12 investment income of approximately \$1.7 million or 1.13
13 return. Staff recommends acceptance of this report.
14 I'd be happy to answer any questions.

15 MR. LEWIS: Commissioners, are there any
16 questions of Mr. Asher at this time? If not,
17 Commissioner Moseley, do you move --

18 MR. MOSELEY: So moved --

19 MR. LEWIS: To accept the -- oh, okay. Vice
20 Chairman Moseley, you move to accept the Quarterly
21 Investment Report according to staff recommendations.
22 Commissioner Austin, you second?

23 MR. AUSTIN: I second that.

24 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and second with
25 regard to this. No further discussion, we'll proceed to

1 a vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

2 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

3 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed say, "No." The
4 motion carries. Thank you, very much.

5 MR. AUSTIN: Mr. Chairman, I find it ironic
6 that we were looking at this one before Central Texas
7 comes up for their approval. I see Stein out there; we
8 got to make sure we hold him accountable for this.

9 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. We'll proceed.
10 General, back to you.

11 GENERAL WEBER: Chairman, with your
12 permission, at this time I'd like to defer consideration
13 of item 8(b).

14 MR. LEWIS: That's -- that's fine. I do
15 grant that permission, and we'll move to the next item.

16 GENERAL WEBER: Then if you'll continue with
17 item 8(c), our Private Activity Bond Surface
18 Transportation Corporation.

19 BEN ASHER: Sure. Thanks, General. Just a
20 little background on this item. In 2008, the Commission
21 created a Private Activity Bond Surface Transportation
22 Corporation to assist with the financing of
23 transportation facilities by enabling developers who
24 enter into comprehensive development agreements with
25 TxDOT. To utilize private activity bonds as part of

1 their plan of finance.

2 The Blue Ridge Transportation Group, which
3 was conditionally awarded the SH 288 project at the
4 February Commission meeting has included private
5 activity bonds in their plan of finance. And this item
6 authorized the corporation to perform the functions
7 necessary to develop the SH 288 toll lane projects
8 through the issuance of private activity bonds. Staff
9 recommends approval, and I'd be happy to answer
10 questions.

11 MR. LEWIS: Are there any questions of
12 Director Asher at this time?

13 MR. AUSTIN: Yes. Ben, would you share with
14 us -- some may not be aware -- where have -- as -- where
15 have private activity bonds been used in other projects
16 in Texas?

17 BEN ASHER: Sure. So we have -- we have
18 used -- it's also -- it's always the developer who's
19 using this, Chairman. And we've used it for three other
20 projects, the North Tarrant Expressway in 2009 -- and I
21 say, "we," the developer.

22 MR. AUSTIN: The project, right.

23 BEN ASHER: The North Tarrant Expressway in
24 2009; the LBJ IH-635 managed lanes in 2010; and more
25 recently, in 2013, the North Tarrant Express 3A and 3B.

1 And those amounts range from 275 to 600 million.

2 MR. AUSTIN: You mentioned the LBJ project.
3 I know that's open up in Dallas now, Senator Huffines'
4 area. Use of the private activity bonds, what liability
5 do we have with the PABs?

6 BEN ASHER: Yeah, so we have no obligation
7 to -- to -- for these bonds. We are the conduit issuer.
8 All repayment is -- is obligated by -- by the developer.
9 They are totally responsibility. And indeed, on the
10 cover of the offering document, which is a document used
11 to service the basis for investors to buy the bonds,
12 that is expressly stated that neither TxDOT nor the
13 State has any obligations. It is on the developer.

14 MR. AUSTIN: So this is a pretty good tool
15 that's used whereas an agency, as a state or whatever,
16 other people are investing funds and we're not.

17 BEN ASHER: Correct, sir. It's a -- it's a
18 tool in the -- frankly, in the developer's tool box that
19 we have enabled them to utilize to obtain favorable
20 financing that enhances the feasibility of a project.

21 MR. AUSTIN: Thank you for that. And this
22 is very important. I know this is being discussed on
23 the federal priorities, the use of PABs. Because what's
24 interesting for federal projects -- this is something
25 that's done federally, it's passed down to the state --

1 I believe Andre's in here -- I believe were capped
2 nationwide at 15 million in there.

3 But unlike airports and sea ports, port of
4 Houston or DFW, they have unlimited ability to use those
5 -- that tool. But for surface transportation, we're
6 limited to use it. It'd be a good opportunity for us to
7 be able to have these other types of funding sources.

8 BEN ASHER: Correct.

9 MR. AUSTIN: Thank you.

10 MR. LEWIS: Are there any other questions at
11 this time? Move, Commission Austin, approval?

12 MR. AUSTIN: Move approval.

13 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

14 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and a second.
15 Any discussion at this time? If not, I'll call to vote.
16 All in favor of the motion please say, "Aye."

17 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

18 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed say, "No." Motion
19 carries.

20 GENERAL WEBER: Ben, if you'll please
21 continue with item 8(d), the applications from CTRMA
22 concerning US 183 South, Bergstrom Expressway.

23 BEN ASHER: Thank you, General. This
24 testimony is to consider final approval of request for
25 financial assistance from the Central Texas Regional

1 Mobility Authority for a state infrastructure bank loan
2 for up to \$30 million and a -- a state highway fund loan
3 of up to \$30 million.

4 Preliminary approval was provided the June
5 25, 2015 Commission meeting. And, as you recall, these
6 funds would all be used to pay for a portion of the cost
7 of constructing US 183 South, Eergstrom expressway.
8 Staff recommends approval, and I'd be happy to answer
9 any questions.

10 MR. LEWIS: Commissioners, are there any
11 questions with regard to this matter? If not,
12 Commissioner Vandergriff, do you move to grant final
13 approval of the application of the Central Texas
14 Regional Mobility Authority for these two loan amounts
15 according to staff recommendation?

16 MR. VANDERGRIFF: I do.

17 MR. LEWIS: And, Commissioner Austin, do you
18 second?

19 MR. AUSTIN: I second.

20 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and a second.
21 All in -- since there's no discussion, proceed to a
22 vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

23 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

24 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Motion
25 carries. Thank you, sir. General.

1 GENERAL WEBER: Next is item 9(a) SIB loan
2 request from the Hidalgo County RMA. Ben, please
3 continue.

4 BEN ASHER: Thank you, General. This item
5 is to consider preliminary approval of a request from
6 the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority for a
7 State Infrastructure bank loan of up to \$42,210,000 for
8 construction costs in connection with Segments 1 and 2
9 and the Border Safety Inspection Facility of SH 365
10 project. Staff recommends approval, and I'd be happy to
11 answer any questions.

12 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. Any -- any questions
13 of the Director at this time?

14 MR. VANDERGRIFF: I just have one -- I just
15 want to confirm that -- I know last month we took the
16 potential of a SIB loan for the 281 project in San
17 Antonio, kind of off the table, got a reaction. So as a
18 result, that -- looking out at the future, this -- this
19 fund is not oversubscribed at this point.

20 BEN ASHER: Yes.

21 MR. VANDERGRIFF: That's correct?

22 BEN ASHER: Yes.

23 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Okay. Because that was a
24 concern that I had, and continued to vote for. Any more
25 of these loans going in the future indicated an

1 oversubscribed position, so --

2 BEN ASHER: In the near term.

3 MR. VANDERGRIFF: I understand your opinion
4 of like a shot in time, or a picture in time it says as
5 of today. I get that.

6 BEN ASHER: Okay. Thank you.

7 MR. LEWIS: Any other --any other questions?
8 We do have a request to make comment card from Randy
9 Sweeten. Randy, if you'll please come forward and state
10 your name, who you're here representing.

11 RANDY SWEETEN: For the record, I'm Randy
12 Sweeten. I'm the Chairman of the Hidalgo County RMA.
13 And, in all due respect, can I sit down and let y'all
14 vote?

15 MR. LEWIS: Do you have any other -- do you
16 have any other comments to make? Any questions at this
17 time?

18 RANDY SWEETEN: I just want to know that's a
19 very wise man. Those were some very wise comments.

20 MR. LEWIS: Well, we have two other requests
21 by comment cards. Both of them also say in the comments
22 say they only want to make a comment if Mr. Sweeten
23 messed up on anything. So let me just ask, anyone in
24 here who's Rodriguez or...I'm not sure -- I can't read
25 the writing on the other.

1 Anyone else wish to make comments at this
2 time? If not, then let's proceed on. Commissioner
3 Bugg, do you have a motion to grant preliminary approval
4 of the request from the Hidalgo County RMA with regard
5 to the loan request?

6 MR. BUGG: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I so move.

7 MR. LEWIS: And, Commissioner Vandergriff,
8 do you second?

9 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

10 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and second.
11 Any other comments? Then if not, we'll proceed to a
12 vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

13 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

14 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Then the
15 motion carries. Thank you.

16 GENERAL WEBER: Next is item 9(b), SIB loan
17 request from Nueces County. Ben, please continue.

18 BEN ASHER: Thank you, General. This item
19 is to consider preliminary approval of an application
20 submitted by Nueces County to borrow \$12 million from
21 the State Infrastructure Bank to fund the county's
22 participation in the Harbor Bridge project. Staff
23 recommends approval, and I'd be happy to answer any
24 questions.

25 MR. LEWIS: Are there any questions on this

1 matter?

2 MR. AUSTIN: Chairman, thank you. As we're
3 looking at this process we have a lot of financial
4 systems agreements and now SIB loans from the prior item
5 to this one. Having worked -- you know, Chairman, you
6 and I have had some really good discussions, looking at
7 the direction of where do we want to go or how do we
8 want to handle the SIB. Ben, you and James, and staff
9 have done a great job.

10 These two, this one and the next one we're
11 going to consider, the process that we went through of
12 looking at terms feasibility ahead of time coming in,
13 has been a little different than hey, we're going to
14 consider it, y'all go work out the terms.

15 And I want to say thank y'all for doing
16 this, because what these two projects are important for,
17 the counties to be able to help on the Harbor Bridge
18 down there. And this is why the SIB was set up by the
19 legislature in 95, now 97 to help cities, counties,
20 municipalities whether it's acquire right of way, move
21 utilities. And these are two great examples to be able
22 to do this.

23 We're not here to replace private sector or
24 other financing, but we're here to supplement and sign.
25 And as we look -- fellow Commissioners, as we're looking

1 at what we're going to do and how we're going to manage
2 the SIB, I believe in the next couple weeks, within the
3 next week or so, OGC's going to look at some draft
4 comments to present to y'all, to come back to staff.

5 And maybe, perhaps in December we might have
6 a workshop to talk about how we're going to utilize the
7 SIB and look at concentrations, et cetera. So this is
8 going to be a very positive discussion. It'll have
9 impact as we do things like this. We are looking
10 forward. And some of you in the audience may be asked,
11 of course, to comment. I see Chairman Pickett, I've got
12 a packet for you to take a look at as well.

13 How can we utilize this to help advance the
14 state? The last comment, Commissioner Vandergriff was
15 right on point; are we oversubscribed. There may be an
16 opportunity or reason we may need to increase the SIB in
17 the next -- in the next year or so.

18 Because if Prop 7 passes, we don't want to
19 have the holdup be a city or municipality saying we
20 can't move right of ways, we don't have the money or the
21 local participation to match. We need to be able to
22 help facilitate this. The State Infrastructure Bank is
23 why it's set up, so we can help, so there may be
24 opportunity. Just considering why we're doing this so
25 we know we're not oversubscribing.

1 With that, that was a long -- but I would
2 move for approval.

3 MR. LEWIS: I thought you might be for it.
4 Moseley?

5 MR. MOSELEY: I'll second that.

6 MR. LEWIS: Are there any -- well, I should
7 ask, any other questions of the Director at this time?
8 Or you have any comments? If not, we'll proceed to a
9 vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

10 COMMISSIONER: "Aye."

11 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. All right.
12 Thank you. Motion carries. General.

13 GENERAL WEBER: Next is item 9(c), SIB loan
14 request from San Patricio County. And please continue.

15 BEN ASHER: Yeah, this item is virtually
16 identical to the -- to the last one. It's to consider
17 preliminary approval of an application submitted by San
18 Patricio County to borrow \$12 million from the State
19 Infrastructure Bank to fund the county's participation
20 in the Harbor Bridge project. Staff recommends
21 approval. Thank you.

22 MR. LEWIS: Any questions? If not,
23 Commissioner Austin, do you move approval of this item?

24 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

25 MR. MOSELEY: Second, Chairman.

1 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and second.
2 Any questions, comments before we vote? If not, we'll
3 proceed to a vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

4 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

5 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Thank you.
6 General Weber.

7 GENERAL WEBER: Item 10(a) consists of the
8 awarding of Maintenance and Department Building
9 Construction contracts. Deputy Director of
10 Construction, Darren Hazlett, will present.

11 DARREN HAZLETT: Good morning. For the
12 record, I'm Darren Hazlett, Deputy Director of
13 Construction Division. Item 10(a) is for the
14 consideration of the award or rejection of Highway
15 Maintenance and Department Building Construction
16 contracts led on October 6th and 7th of 2015.

17 We present 32 projects today. We've
18 received 113 bids, for an overall average number of bids
19 of 3.32 per project. Total low bid value was
20 \$34,402,222.77. We had an overall overrun of 1.27
21 percent. Staff recommends award of all maintenance
22 projects with the exception of the following project
23 which we are recommending for rejection.

24 Project number RMC-629025001, a cleaning,
25 sweeping, and debris removal project for Starr County,

1 in the Pharr District received one single bid, which was
2 68.46 percent, or \$294,750 over the engineer's estimate.
3 Due to the significant overage, the District has
4 indicated they would like the opportunity to reexamine
5 the scope of the project, we concur, and therefore
6 recommend that this project be rejected and relet at a
7 later date.

8 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much. Are there
9 any questions for Deputy Director Hazlett at this time
10 on these matters? Commissioner Bugg, do you move that
11 we award and -- and -- award the construction contracts
12 as listed in Exhibit "A" in accordance with staff
13 recommendations and reject those which they recommend be
14 rejected as well?

15 MR. BUGG: I so move, Chairman.

16 MR. LEWIS: And, Commissioner Vandergriff,
17 do you second that motion?

18 MR. VANDERGRIFF: I do.

19 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and second.
20 Are there any questions or comments before we vote? We
21 will proceed to a vote. All in favor of the motion say,
22 "Aye."

23 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

24 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. The motion
25 carries. Thank you.

1 GENERAL WEBER: Darren, please proceed with
2 item 10(b), the construction contract.

3 DARREN HAZLETT: Item 10(b) is Award or
4 rejection of Highway and Transportation Enhancement
5 Building Construction contracts let on October 6th and
6 7th of 2015. And Tarrant County project NH-2016(098)
7 deferred from the September 24, 2015 Commission meeting.

8 We present 45 projects today for which we've
9 received 196 bids, giving us an overall average number
10 of 4.36 bids per project. The low bid value was
11 \$341,271,956.49. The projects were split as two
12 mobility projects totaling \$118,650,202.88, and 43
13 preservation projects totaling \$222,621,753.61. We had
14 an overall underrun of 9.12 percent.

15 Staff recommends award of all construction
16 projects with the exception of the September 24, 2015
17 Commission meeting deferred the Tarrant County project,
18 which we again recommend for deferral.

19 MR. LEWIS: Are there any more -- are there
20 any questions of Deputy Director Hazlett with regard to
21 this matter? Then, Commissioner Bugg, do you move that
22 we award, reject or defer the Highway Transportation
23 Enhancement Building and Construction contracts as
24 listed in Exhibit "A" and in accordance with staff
25 recommendations?

1 MR. BUGG: Chairman, I so move.

2 MR. LEWIS: And, Commissioner Vandergriff,
3 do you second?

4 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

5 MR. LEWIS: We have a motion and second.
6 Any comment, questions? If not, we'll proceed to a
7 vote. All in favor please say, "Aye."

8 COMMISSIONERS: Aye.

9 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Thank you,
10 very much.

11 DARREN HAZLETT: Thank you.

12 GENERAL WEBER: That brings us to item 11
13 the, Eminent Domain Proceedings. Director of Right of
14 Way, John Campbell will present.

15 JOHN CAMPBELL: Good morning. Again, my
16 name's John Campbell, Director of the Right of Way
17 Division. I'd like to present for your consideration
18 item 11 which authorizes the filing of condemnation
19 proceedings necessary to progress the acquisition of 19
20 parcels on 11 projects. Thirteen of these parcels are
21 on non-controlled facilities and six of them are on
22 controlled facilities. Staff recommends your approval
23 of the minute.

24 MR. LEWIS: Are there any questions of
25 Director Campbell at this time? If not, then I think we

1 should move right on to the -- for the Commission to
2 receive the motion, which I think that Commissioner Bugg
3 has got himself ready to make. Commissioner Bugg?

4 MR. BUGG: Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman. I am
5 ready to move that the Texas Transportation Commission
6 authorize the Texas Department of Transportation to use
7 the power of eminent domain to acquire the properties
8 described in the minute order set forth in the agenda
9 for the current month of construction, reconstruction,
10 maintenance, widening, straightening, or extending the
11 highway facilities listed in the minute order as a part
12 of the state highway system and a first record vote
13 applies to all units of property to be condemned.

14 MR. MOSELEY: Commissioner Bugg did such a
15 great job of moving, I'll be happy to second.

16 MR. LEWIS: Actually, present a motion and
17 second that motion, and without further comment then
18 we'll proceed to a vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

19 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

20 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Thank you.
21 Motion is adopted.

22 GENERAL WEBER: Item 12 contains the Routine
23 Minute Orders, including Donations to the Department,
24 Real Estate Dispositions, Finance reports,
25 Transportation Planning, Access Control, and Speed

1 Zones. With your permission, Chairman, I have one item
2 that needs to be deferred, and that's the real estate
3 disposition for Fort Bend county.

4 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, General. At this
5 time, we'll defer item 12(b)(4).

6 GENERAL WEBER: Thank you, very much.

7 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, gentlemen. We will,
8 at this time, at your request defer the Fort Bend County
9 item 12 and 12(b)(4). Commissioners, are there any
10 other questions concerning the routine minute orders?
11 If not, Vice Chair Moseley, do --

12 MR. MOSELEY: So moved.

13 MR. LEWIS: -- you move to approve -- move
14 to approve the routine minute orders?

15 MR. MOSELEY: Yes, sir.

16 MR. LEWIS: Including all items with the
17 exception of that item 12(b)(4), the Fort Bend County
18 disposition?

19 MR. MOSELEY: Yes, sir. So moved.

20 MR. LEWIS: And Commissioner Austin?

21 MR. AUSTIN: I'll second.

22 MR. LEWIS: You second. We have a motion
23 and a second. All in favor please say, "Aye."

24 COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

25 MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Then that is

1 approved at this time. At this -- at this time we will
2 need to go into Executive Session in accordance with
3 Government Code Section 551.071. At this time, the time
4 -- the time is 10:32 a.m., and we'll go into Executive
5 Session at this time to return later. Thank you.

6 (BREAK FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION)

7 MR. LEWIS: All right. The Commission has
8 concluded its Executive Session. The meeting of the
9 Texas Transportation Commission is reconvened. Time is
10 11:51 a.m. All of the action items on the agenda are
11 therefore completed.

12 We do have -- we have received some Open
13 Comment cards. As I remind you, if you wish to make an
14 open comment, as your name is called come forward. Make
15 -- state your name and who you're representing, and then
16 give us the benefit of your comments.

17 And, again, I remind you that the -- the
18 Commission itself will not be able to respond to those
19 comments since it's open -- Open Comment session. The
20 first comment card I have is from Chad Nobles. Please
21 come forward and begin, sir.

22 CHAD NOBLES: Good afternoon. My name is
23 Chad Nobles. I'm a landowner in the -- regarding -- I'm
24 here today to really talk about State Highway 249 as
25 I've done in the past. I'm a landowner in the area.

1 And, as you guys recall, you remember my map. You're
2 probably all familiar with my map at this point. I
3 wanted to make one correction to it. Originally, we had
4 only my parents' home right here.

5 And my dad pointed out that actually some of
6 the other homes that are marked are actually barn
7 houses, where they're actually a barn and actually
8 house. Right next to my parents' house is actually our
9 barn house. We actually -- my parents lived in it
10 before building our house. And most recently, we had a
11 young couple with two kids living in it for over a year
12 in that actual house. So it sits right next theirs. I
13 wanted to point that out.

14 But if you recall, back in August when we
15 were here, we had 90 percent of the landowners, all
16 these in white, stakeholders in the area supporting this
17 southern route. We gave you guys letters on that
18 stating that that's what we wanted. Most recently, we
19 were shown this map. And this map, as you can see, has
20 added three additional routes.

21 We're here today to continue our support of
22 what TxDOT is calling now the black route, or as it's
23 seen here, white. We had all the letters at that time
24 supporting that, as you can see in the white. This
25 route is by far geometrically superior from a safety

1 concern. You have one curve. You have no impact to
2 homes whatsoever. There is -- if you recall, there was
3 only one issue with this route, which was the property
4 owner here, that made a statement about division of
5 property.

6 The other thing that I really wanted to
7 point out was TxDOT is now recommending this route, and
8 that is by far the worst route for my family and my
9 parents; by far the worst. It is -- from a safety
10 concern, it has three curves. We were told that they
11 would have to relocate County Road 307. We were told
12 that they would have to fill in this lake. We were told
13 that -- well, we weren't actually told, but there's
14 wetlands all in this area.

15 There are three major springs, from an
16 environmental situation, that are huge that aren't shown
17 on this map. Beechen Creek or Jackrabbit Creek actually
18 runs all underneath this entire property line here,
19 that's not shown on this map. All of this is wetlands.
20 The cemetery extends way over into this property and
21 area over here. The distance between this pipeline and
22 the cemetery is less than 325 feet, so not sure how
23 we're going to get a 400-foot easement through there.

24 But again, all this is to point out if you
25 look at this, I'm not sure how they came up with this as

1 a preferred route, but again, we are here to say today
2 and the public has said in the past, 90 percent of the
3 public in this area said we will support this black
4 route. So if you want to move forward with the road,
5 let's put the black route. The Nobles are here to
6 support that route, and we appreciate you getting
7 involved in this process. Thank you.

8 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much. We also
9 have a card from Amy Nobles. After stating your name,
10 who you're representing and state your view.

11 AMY NOBLES: My name is Amy Nobles and I am
12 here also representing our family as property owners in
13 Grimes County. Thanks for having us. Thanks for
14 letting us speak at the end. And I just wanted to speak
15 today again to highlight the concerns of the
16 stakeholders involved in the route for the selection
17 process related to the 249 road in Grimes County.

18 And I just wanted to reiterate Chad's
19 statement that the majority of the stakeholders are in
20 support of the black route. We have been advised that
21 this route is clearly geometrically superior. It will
22 avoid all residences, will be the least destructive
23 environmentally, and provide for a safer route for high
24 speed travel.

25 We as stakeholders, and specifically

1 landowners whose property will be affected, are prepared
2 to support the recommendations of the black route and to
3 help TxDOT move forward with this route selection
4 process, and to get on with construction.

5 I would also ask that since you are not able
6 to ask questions of us or your staff at this time, that
7 you would take the time following this to ask follow-up
8 questions and to hear their feedback and our feedback
9 concerning their recommendations. Again, we just want
10 to support the black route and let you know that if that
11 we would be on that.

12 Kate's up next, so I'm just going to stay
13 with her.

14 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. Kate Nobles. Please
15 come forward, after stating your name and who you're
16 here representing, then you may give your statement.

17 KATE NOBLES: My name is Kate Nobles and I'm
18 representing my family. I came today to ask you not to
19 build a road on my grandparents' land, and to tell you
20 that I am adamantly opposed to the blue and white
21 routes. The farm is my favorite place to go and with
22 the fast road on the property, it will not be safe for
23 me to play, fish, hunt, and ride around on my bike like
24 I do with my puppy, brother, and cousins.

25 Please move the road to another route so my

1 grandparents, (Indiscernible) and Nana won't be sad.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much.

4 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman, I'm not -- I'm not
5 -- I won't deliberate. I just want to say thank you to
6 Kate for coming today, bringing your testimony. Thank
7 you, Kate. You did a very good job.

8 AMY NOBLES: It was her own suggestion. She
9 wanted to do it, so...

10 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, very much. Sandra
11 Nobles. Please come forward.

12 SANDRA NOBLES: My name is Sandra Nobles,
13 and that's a hard act to follow. I'm here, once again,
14 in regard to the proposed route for the 249 toll road
15 that's going to affect our property on County Road 307.
16 I'm sorry. We are definitely opposed to the blue route,
17 which was just presented to us recently because it's the
18 most detrimental to our homestead, our peaceful
19 surrounding, and it raises some real serious safety
20 questions.

21 Since all of the proposed routes will affect
22 our property, we ask that you would please support the
23 black route. This route was chosen by the stakeholders
24 on County Road 307 and presented in previous meetings.
25 Again, we strongly oppose the blue route. My neighbors,

1 Terry and Mildred Gabriel had planned to come today to
2 also speak to you all at this meeting, but for some
3 unforeseen circumstances they were not able to be here.

4 They gave us a letter at about 8:30 last
5 night and asked that we present it to you today. If
6 it's okay with you all, I can read you the letter, or
7 just submit it, whatever you wish:

8 "We are" -- it's dated last night. "We are
9 not able to attend the meeting on October 29, 2015 but
10 we would like you to know that we are opposed to the
11 blue route presented to them -- to us by the Bryan
12 District TxDOT office. We own property that would be
13 affected by the blue route. We signed a statement
14 previously presented to the Commissioners in which we
15 favored the black route. We are still in support of the
16 black route and ask that you will give it consideration.
17 Thank you, Mildred Gabriel and Terry Gabriel."

18 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. Next we have Robert
19 -- Robert Nobles. Please come forward. State your name
20 and make your statement.

21 ROBERT NOBLES: Thank you. My name is
22 Robert Nobles, and I am opposed to the blue route also.
23 In my yard, if you look out, and it's just going to be a
24 few feet from our house which is going to be our view,
25 our quietness. We live, as I told you last time, down a

1 dead end road. We have just County Road 307, and it
2 does touch our property.

3 The route that is proposed by the blue route
4 will come up the east side of our property over here and
5 it will go across the whole -- so it'll take the whole
6 east side and it'll take the whole front of our property
7 across there. So we're not only going -- you know,
8 we're going to have a toll road here, going to have a
9 toll road here.

10 And on top of that, I've got to drive under
11 a bridge, TxDOT out of Bryan told me. We've got to
12 drive under a bridge to get to my property now, and it's
13 only going to be a few feet of frontage there. So I'm
14 losing my frontage. It's going to take some of our
15 frontage, and split our property again. So I don't
16 understand the reasoning behind what they're doing.

17 You're also going to be cutting across a
18 beautiful lake. Sitting on our back porch, you can look
19 at this beautiful lake. It's not on our property, but
20 it's right there. And they're telling us that they're
21 going to fill it in with dirt to get 200 feet on this
22 side and 200 feet on our side. Why would you even
23 consider doing something like that?

24 There's a cemetery there. It seems like
25 they're going to come right by the cemetery. And I know

1 there's bodies out there, and there's graves out there,
2 and they're old. Why is TxDOT not listening to the
3 stakeholders that chose the route? You had one opposed
4 person, one person you had to deal with I guess for your
5 eminent domain powers or whatever, or however you make a
6 deal with.

7 But instead, they chose to come around with
8 another route. Why? You had 87 percentage -- the TxDOT
9 office said you have 87 percent approval. You had one
10 person that opposed it, yet why did they even come up
11 with another route? I mean, you had one person. Now
12 you've got more than one person opposed.

13 Also, there's property owners that you're
14 now going to go across that haven't even been contacted
15 by TxDOT and told, we're going to come this other way
16 now. Why? But TxDOT will now tell you, because after
17 we met with them, they will now tell you they have no
18 support on the black route no more -- anymore. The
19 reason they had no support is they moved the route.
20 It's not even coming close to them anymore.

21 Well, guess what, if you move the route way
22 away from me, I'm -- I'm -- man, I'm for it, too, move
23 the route. So why would you even consider the blue
24 route when you had the support here of these people.
25 You moved the route over here. Now these people -- some

1 of these people will not support it. So now they're not
2 going to say you had one person opposed to it, no; we
3 got several people opposed to it over here.

4 MR. LEWIS: Sum up your remarks, please.

5 ROBERT NOBLES: That is basically it. And I
6 thank you for your time, and I appreciate it.

7 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, sir. Dean Eversole.

8 DEAN EVERSOLE: Chairman, I'd like to ask
9 y'all because recently the toll roads wasn't going
10 through me, but I felt like the chain of command has
11 failed to get to you guys, so I would ask for five
12 minutes instead of three minutes so I can explain. It's
13 very important.

14 MR. LEWIS: You have three minutes.

15 DEAN EVERSOLE: No more?

16 MR. LEWIS: No, sir. Three minutes.

17 DEAN EVERSOLE: Okay. To give you the
18 history, ten years ago I bought this piece of property.
19 Went out and looked at it Saturday afternoon, 3:00, got
20 back at 4. And the guy told me, he said, I need to tell
21 you something, there's a cemetery here. I need to show
22 it to you because some people might be scared of
23 cemeteries.

24 Went out and saw the cemetery. Then he
25 said, Mr. Eversole, he said, this used to be an old

1 Indian tribe that lived here. The Indians are buried
2 here; do you have a problem? I said, no, I don't have a
3 problem with that. I have Indian blood in me, two
4 different bloods in me. So I bought the property the
5 very day, million-and-a-half bucks, and boom, I -- I
6 like that.

7 So the Indians and me, that's my ancestors,
8 well, guess what happened to my ancestors? White man
9 come, killed them, take their land. Now, TxDOT's
10 wanting to put a freeway over the top of the Indian
11 burial ground, and there are 21 people buried there.
12 There's no way -- I tried to tell the people down in
13 Bryan that, hey, it's people here.

14 I went away with this. We don't -- you see
15 how we --we treat the living? We're not worried about
16 the dead. So do you guys know that that many people are
17 buried there? I doubt it. So anyway, I'm a little
18 upset about it. And I appreciate the time. And how
19 much time I got left? Okay.

20 MR. LEWIS: A minute and 13 seconds.

21 DEAN EVERSOLE: Okay. So it's very
22 important that you guys understand. So the white man
23 took our land and wiped us out. Fine. But I'm -- I'm
24 Indian. Now, where my ancestors lived, and died, and
25 was buried wasn't even out there where they said the

1 Indians was buried. We found a few Indian artifacts in
2 the ground about six, seven inches deep. A bunch of
3 arrowheads.

4 And I'm happy. I'm very happy that I own
5 that property because my ancestors lived there. If you
6 look in the evenings, the moon come up, it's -- it's one
7 of the second highest elevations all of Grimes County.
8 It's very high. Most beautiful setting. Why did my
9 ancestors live there? There's several springs. There's
10 a three-inch artesian spring that flows through there,
11 okay. They had a great place to live.

12 And so -- and my last statement, I
13 appreciate your time. Our lives matter. Our lives
14 matter out there. Maybe people in Austin don't think
15 our lives matter, but our lives matter. Thank you, very
16 much, gentlemen.

17 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Mr. Eversole. Let's
18 see, we have, Mr. Dixon. We have a request to speak
19 from Mr. Don Dixon.

20 DON DIXON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My
21 name is Don Dixon. I'm speaking for myself. I did sign
22 up for 8(d), and may I make a few comments on that? I
23 know you've already voted on it.

24 MR. LEWIS: This is Open Comment period.

25 DON DIXON: Okay.

1 MR. LEWIS: I can't tell you what to speak
2 on or not. You've got 3 minutes.

3 DON DIXON: Yeah, I signed up to speak on
4 that, and...

5 MR. LEWIS: But your comments are open
6 comments, if anything you wish to speak on, but we can't
7 consider an agenda item.

8 DON DIXON: I understand. Well, I went up
9 to an A&M football game a couple of weeks ago, watched
10 A&M get beat pretty bad by Alabama. And I said, I want
11 to find out what all this controversy is over in Grimes
12 County.

13 I had friends over there that said you know
14 they're going to take \$292 million of State money and
15 they're going to put that -- then they're going to build
16 a toll road out of it, and it's going to come through a
17 lot of private land. So I got in my little car and I
18 drove it. I wanted to see what the controversy's about.

19 And so I drove from Navasota 105,
20 Plantersville, down 1774, down to Mill Creek where --
21 where the -- the map that someone gave me shows that --
22 that they will cut across to private land. So I
23 measured the cross raw land distance. And I measured
24 the distance up through Plantersville across one, which
25 would be basically existing right of way.

1 And if my figures turned out, it's 7, 800
2 feet difference. A little bit longer up through
3 Plantersville. But if they used the existing right of
4 way, and right south of Plantersville where 1774 goes
5 east and west, they went straight west and picked up
6 109, right east of the railroad repair yard you might
7 pick up the 7. So it'd be basically the same distance.

8 So why have all this controversy? It's just
9 a whole lot easier to use an existing right of way, use
10 the 292 million the most efficiently you can by using
11 the existing right of way, and not have a toll road.

12 Our students that my family and myself
13 support at A&M on scholarships, they live in that north
14 Houston area, and they wanted to take a shorter route,
15 go for it. But they can't afford it; they're -- they're
16 on tight budgets. They're not wanting to have an
17 exorbitant process to get to A&M, and I wouldn't think
18 some of the professors would either, and the
19 administrative people at A&M.

20 Build the road if it's needed. Use the \$292
21 million. Make it a regular public road that everybody
22 could use with their public money. Build it on the
23 existing right of way. Have a lot less economic
24 impacts, lot less controversy; and it would be a win,
25 win, win for everybody.

1 You all are engineers. This is an
2 engineering agency. That's what -- that's what you do
3 here. And this is what engineers do, okay. They figure
4 out a public need and they solve it the best way they
5 can, and this is best way to do it. Revisit this from
6 day one. Let's make a public road out of this, use the
7 292, and use the existing route. Lot less controversy.
8 Thank you.

9 Now, do I have any time?

10 MR. LEWIS: I believe your time's expired,
11 Mr. Dixon.

12 DON DIXON: It's already expired. Well, I'm
13 sorry about the -- I wanted to talk about that \$30
14 million that they're going to put on this 183 public. I
15 didn't like that either. I think it should go to public
16 -- if it's going to be public money, it ought to go to a
17 public road.

18 MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Mr. Dixon. That's
19 all of the cards that we have. Is there any other --
20 all the items are completed. If there's no other
21 business to come before the Commission, Commissioner
22 Bugg, do you move that we adjourned?

23 MR. BUGG: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

24 MR. LEWIS: And, Commissioner Vandergriff,
25 do you second that motion?

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MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

MR. LEWIS: All in favor say, "Aye."

COMMISSIONERS: "Aye."

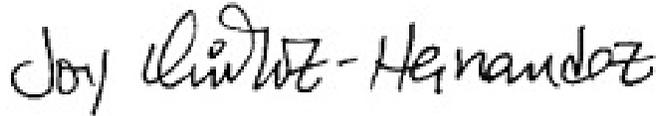
MR. LEWIS: Any opposed, no. Motion carries. Thank you, very much, all for being here. The time is 12:12 p.m.

(PROCEEDING CONCLUDED)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Joy Quiroz-Hernandez, Certified Shorthand Reporter Number 8391 for The State of Texas, do hereby certify that I did, in computerized stenotype shorthand, transcribe proceedings in the above-entitled matter to the best of my ability and hearing, proceedings before the Texas Department of Transportation Commission and that the above and foregoing pages contain a full and correct computer-assisted transcription of my computerized stenotype shorthand notes.



Joy Quiroz-Hernandez, CSR
CSR No. 8391 - Expires 12/31/15
Veritext Legal Solutions
300 Throckmorton, Suite 1600
Fort Worth, Texas 76102
(800) 336-4000

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0	13.2 26:12	74:16 76:6,7,16	67:2,3 94:13
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