

## Legislative Update - March 7, 2011

Please contact members of the House Appropriations Committee as soon as possible with the following message:

**"Because we believe in the important work of the Texas Heritage Trails program, and its positive effect on the economy of Texas, we ask you to support the six HB1 riders for the Texas Historical Commission submitted by Rep. Doug Miller in direct response to the discussion at the full House Appropriations Committee meeting on Thursday, 2/24/11. "**

### **Background**

On Thursday, March 3, Rep. Doug Miller of New Braunfels filed riders to HB 1, the Appropriations Act, that would restore \$8 million to the Texas Historical Commission budget with a heavy emphasis on saving programs important to heritage tourism like the Texas Heritage Trails Program and historic courthouse restoration.

Stakeholders should contact members of the Appropriations Committee quickly. The House Appropriations Committee will take up pending items and riders next Mon, March 14 and Tue, March 15; THC is a pending item in the committee.

Analysis of the six riders and a related Q&A follow on page 2 and 3.

While contact with any member of the Committee would be valuable, the following representatives have been most sympathetic and should be a priority to contact:

Rep. Jimmie Don Aycok, Killeen;	Rep. Susan King, Abilene;
Rep. Warren Chisum, Pampa;	Rep. Dee Margo, El Paso;
Rep. Myra Crownover, Denton;	Rep. Ruth Jones McClendon, San Antonio;
Rep. Drew Darby, San Angelo;	Rep. Geanie Morrison, Victoria;
Rep. Dawnna Dukes, Austin;	Rep. John Otto, Dayton;
Rep. Craig Eiland, Galveston;	Rep. Diane Patrick, Arlington;
Rep. Helen Giddings, Dallas;	Rep. Mark Shelton, Fort Worth;
Rep. Lance Gooden, Terrell;	Rep. Mike Villarreal, San Antonio; and
Rep. Scott Hochberg, Houston;	Rep. John Zerwas, Simonton.

Standard format for email to a House member is: [firstname.lastname@house.state.tx.us](mailto:firstname.lastname@house.state.tx.us)

## **Texas Historical Commission Riders**

Submitted 3/3/2011 by Rep. Doug Miller

Rider 19 Substitute – adds \$8 million to the \$2 million in Rider 19 of HB 1 as filed. Funding, at no cost to the bill, comes from the approximately \$10.7 million in the Texas Preservation Trust Fund transferred by this Contingency Rider from the Texas Safekeeping Trust to GR-Dedicated Account 664 in the general fund. In addition to the allocations of the \$2 million in the original Rider 19, the substitute allocates additional funds primarily to the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (@ \$4 million) and to the Texas Heritage Trails Program (@ \$2.5 million) and Commission programs and projects directly related to heritage tourism. Additional funding is directed primarily to necessary administrative and staff services support for restored FTE. The substitute Rider 19 restores 30.5 funded FTE of the total 76.3 FTE eliminated by HB 1; the Rider also authorizes an additional 5 unfunded FTE to be used only if the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission, a statutory 501(c), raises private or non-state funds for the purpose.

[Rider 19 is contingent on passage of separate legislation.]

Rider 20 Substitute – Amends THC Rider 20 for the purpose of allowing a Main Street community accepted on a provisional basis to gain full status. Does not alter HB 1 intent to cap the program; imposes no additional cost to the bill.

Rider 21 Deleted – Deletes Rider 21 which terminates the Texas Heritage Trails Program.

New Rider 21 – Substitute and renumbering of Rider 23. This Rider authorizes funds in substitute Rider 19 for a required match (\$712,000) needed to retain an estimated \$4.96 million (at 8/31/2011) of the existing, five-year federal transportation enhancement grant funding the Texas Heritage Trails.

New Rider 22 – Authorizes funding in substitute Rider 19 for a required match (\$230,000) needed to retain the \$1.38 million three-year federal transportation enhancement grant previously approved for historic highways programs. Government Code 442.025 and 442.026 direct THC and TXDOT to pursue funding for these programs directly related to heritage tourism.

New Rider 23 – UB authority for funds allocated by substitute Rider 19 to the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program.

## **Q&A Regarding Texas Historical Commission Riders**

**Q** What's the cost to the bill?

**A** No cost to the bill.

**Q** Would this \$10 million otherwise help certify the bill?

**A** Yes, but

- \$2 million was already earmarked in HB 1 as filed.
- \$8 million more supports programs we expressed concern about when we discussed the agency, programs critical to small towns and rural areas.
  
- We're still cutting the budget of this agency from \$104.9 million in the current biennium to \$32 million, a reduction of \$72.9 million.
- Even with these riders, THC assumes a larger percentage contribution to balancing this budget (-69.5%) than any other continuing agency.\*
- Texas history shoulders more than its share of the burden.

**Q** Do these riders leverage additional money for tourism?

**A** Yes, \$6.34 million in previously approved federal grants is saved by these riders; funds underwriting the Texas Heritage Trails program and the tourism-related Bankhead and historic highways programs enacted last session.

Designation of historic roads creates a new economic engine for cultural travel across Texas. Ask folks along Route 66 in the Panhandle.

\*I.E. budget reductions, not loss of federal stimulus flow-through.