

**TIMELINE OF ACTIONS HB 300 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**  
**81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature**  
**May 26, 2009 through May 31, 2009**

**Monday, May 25, 2009**

CSHB 300 TxDot Sunset bill passes Texas Senate and sent back to House

**Tuesday, May 26, 2009**

Senator Hegar goes to House in effort to ask House to suspend rules and appoint a conference committee early so all conference committee members to HB 300 could begin working out their differences on the bill. While in the House, he also visited with Sunset Director Joey Longley, and Hegar asked for best and worst case timeframe to get the TxDot Conference Report accomplished in order to meet Legislative Council deadlines of drafting, editing, printing and distributing to meet House and Senate deadlines. The answer was NOW.

Senator Hegar walks to the desk of Carona around 9:30pm at night and mentioned the looming deadlines and that Legislative Council said it needed to begin getting decisions on the differences between the chambers and that all decisions should be made by 5pm on Wednesday, May 27th. Hegar suggested that he meet with Representative Isett to begin working through non controversial issues, which Senator Carona said was a good idea. Thus, Hegar and Isett worked through issues to well after midnight on the bill in the Betty King Room. At the end of the meeting they agreed to meet again at 8am on Wednesday, May 27th to continue working on non controversial issues.

**Wednesday, May 27, 2009**

Senator Hegar and Representative Isett continue working through issues on HB 300 and at some point Chairman Joe Pickett and Senator Robert Nichols also join the meeting. The meeting ends by 10am. By 11am, Senator Hegar invited fellow Senators to join him, Isett and Pickett in the Betty King room to work through issues on HB 300. During this meeting Senator Nichols continued working with the group, plus the addition of Senator Carona and Senator Watson's staffs. This group continued to work until about 1am.

Prior to the end of the meeting Senator Carona joined the group and he had a very good discussion with House members about the local option tax and how he was willing to push out the effective date until 2012, plus lower the other two fees that he has proposed. Everyone had a very productive conversation and agreed to continue the dialogue.

At some point during the day, the House appointed conferees to HB 300. House also passes a motion to instruct not to bring back HB 300 with a local option tax language by a margin of 84 to 59. When the House appointed conferees the House also suspended the 24 hour printing rule for HB 300 and this effectively pushed the Legislative Council deadlines to noon on Thursday, May 28th.

### **Thursday, May 28, 2009**

Hegar had arranged for a meet in the Betty King room at 8am to work on HB 300. At some point during the morning the Senate appoints conferees. Most of the bill gets fully vetted by Hegar, Senator Nichols, Senator Carona's staff, Senator Watson's staff, and House conferees. Senator Carona was unable to attend the meetings because he had personal business back at home and was gone until about 2pm. Nevertheless, his staff was very helpful in leading the discussion on behalf of Senator Carona.

From about noon until 3pm, Senator Hegar visits with House members to discuss Carona's local option tax plan and tries to come up with ideas as a continuation of Wednesday's discussions.

By roughly 2pm, Representative Pickett and Senator Carona's staff have a discussion in Representative Pickett's office which is not productive. Senator Hegar visits with Representative Pickett to understand the events of the discussion and then also visits with Senator Carona's staff to get their side of the discussion. By around 4:30 pm, Senator Hegar invites Senator Carona, Representative Pickett, and Representative Isett to his office to discuss the local option tax logjam. During the meeting both Representatives insist that the votes do not exist in the House and they will not bring a local option tax to the House floor. Representative Isett leaves the meeting to catch a flight home for a district event and we continued to talk for another few minutes. Senator Carona repeats his comments that without a local option tax, then there will not be a sunset bill this session.

By 7pm all Senate Conferees get together to discuss how to proceed and decide to allow Senator Carona the opportunity to continue negotiations, plus they will get together at 8am Friday, May 29th to go through the agreed portions of the bill. During the meeting Senator Carona discusses the importance of adding in the so called orange line provision to help out the Irving area in Representative Linda Harper-Brown's district.

### **Friday, May 29, 2009**

The Senate conferees meet in the Betty King room to discuss HB 300 and in between 8am and 11am; Senators Hegar, Nichols, Watson and Hinojosa go through the entire agreed portions of the bill. Senator Carona's staff represented Senator Carona who was unable to attend for unknown business. The members all agreed to the provisions in the bill and the outstanding issues were some billboard provisions added by the House, ban on red light cameras and the local option tax.

By later in the day, Senator Hegar receives a letter from four of the five House conferees on HB 300 which says they will not accept a bill with a local option tax and will not sign a conference committee report that contains local option tax. Senator Hegar finds each member of the Senate conference committee to discuss the letter individually. Both Senator Hinojosa and Senator Nichols mention that we cannot send a bill over that the House members will not accept. Senator Watson has no comment on the letter and Senator Carona said that he could still get the votes in the House. The problem is there would not be anything to vote on without a valid conference committee report signed by at least 3 members of both chambers.

By late in the evening Senator Hegar has a conference report on his desk with four House Signatures. He first has a chance to find Senator Nichols and then Senator Hinojosa, which all three agreed that if the controversial billboard provisions, the red light cameras and local option are all pulled out of the bill then we must move forward or face the bill's failure. Senator Hegar visits with Senator Watson and Senator Carona as soon as he could find them. Senator Watson

disagreed with signing the report, as well as Senator Carona as he dressed down Senator Hegar by saying that, "I will teach you a lesson and rip you to shreds." Knowing that Senator Carona has worked extremely hard on Texas Transportation this session and that he is a very good, honest, hardworking member of the Senate, Hegar decided to just take the tongue lashing because he knew it was said in haste. In an effort to give Senator Carona time to calm down and to continue working on his efforts, Senator Hegar holds the conference report until Saturday, May 30th.

During the evening, Senator Hegar mentions to House conferees about adding orange line language because Senator Carona's staff had earlier sent legislative council drafting instructions on Senator Hegar's bill to make further changes to the local option tax and to add the orange line language to HB 300. It is agreed that the conferees would request to go outside the bounds to add the language and Senator Hegar asked if he could include SB 1572 by Senator Hinojosa, which allows a city to comment to TCEQ for a tire reclamation project if the project is within a city's ETJ and allow both a groundwater district and county to comment if the project is outside a City's ETJ. The Senators had worked on this language all session and it was a bill that had died in the process. During many conference reports, members ask to go outside the bounds of the bill to add in new provisions to the bill.

#### **Saturday, May 30, 2009**

Senator Hegar approached Senator Carona and asked if they could visit. Hegar said that he was sorry for any turn of events and that the two should visit after everyone gets more rest and after session ends. Senator Carona mentioned that the report should be turned in since it has enough signatures and that he might need to apologize for some comments he made to the press about Senator Hegar. At this point Senator Carona offered his hand and we agreed that we must move forward. The two had a very good dialogue about how much each enjoyed working with one another and that both men thought very highly of each other and their shared work ethics.

Senator Hegar distributes the conference report and files HB 300 with the Senate, while Representative Isett does the same with the House.

#### **Sunday, May 31, 2009**

Senator Carona threatens filibuster