



Scenic Byways—Scenic Texas Fact Sheet

Texas is one of two states that has failed to join the national scenic byways program; our state is conspicuously absent from the national byways map. This legislation would change that. Texas would finally be able to access federal funds for the special designation of roads that are aesthetically, culturally or historically significant. In 2001, the legislature directed TxDOT to study whether Texas should join the National Byways Program. TxDOT has contracted with Southwest Texas University to complete the study and report to the legislature in 2003. In anticipation of a positive outcome, Scenic Texas is proposing the byway legislation.

- Joining the Byways program will allow some of our federal tax dollars to come back into Texas rather than being funneled to other states.
- Scenic byways generate between \$30,000 and \$35,000 per mile annually in tourism dollars.
- There is no cost to the state of Texas; this is permissive legislation, i.e., Texas “opts in.” 80% of funds for projects are supplied by the Federal Government, with the remaining 20% supplied by private donations or by other local contributions.
- Byway designations are made locally, not by outsiders.
- Scenic byway designations offer communities the opportunity to protect the outstanding qualities along their roadways while encouraging economic development through tourism
- Texas' inclusion on the National Scenic Byways map, website and other publications would alert a national audience to the visual diversity in Texas and would yield recreation monies from outside of Texas.
- Once approved, scenic roads (such as the Texas Trails) would be eligible to appear on all National Scenic Byways publications, thereby alerting a greater audience to Texas heritage. Since they do not require additional funding, the process is simple.
- Designated roads preserve and enhance the byway's intrinsic qualities as well as promote tourism and economic development.
- This bill does not remove existing billboards from scenic byways but prohibits new billboard construction. Since no billboards will be removed, this legislation is consistent with property owners' rights.

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