

Low-Income Vehicle Repair Assistance, Retrofit, and Accelerated Retirement Program Administration

Issue

Allow counties utilizing Low-Income Vehicle Repair Assistance, Retrofit, and Accelerated Retirement Program (LIRAP) funds to designate a central administrator who can contract on behalf of the counties with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for LIRAP funds for both the AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine program and for the local initiatives program.

Background

The assistance program was originally created under the LIRAP provisions of HB 2134, 77th Legislature, 2001, and amended by HB 1611 in the 79th Legislature, 2005. The program under the name Drive a Clean Machine was the result of further amendments under SB 12, 80th Legislature, 2007. LIRAP was implemented by the Texas Legislature to increase financial incentives for low-income Texans to replace older, dirtier vehicles with newer, cleaner ones. Five counties from the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria nonattainment region participate in the LIRAP program.

The TCEQ provides funding via contract agreement to counties participating in the assistance program. Current legislation states that participating counties may subcontract with any appropriate entity, such as the regional council of governments or the metropolitan planning organization in the appropriate region, or with another county for services necessary to implement the program.

Legislative Action Needed

Revise current legislation to allow regional administrators of LIRAP funds to contract directly with TCEQ on behalf of participating counties.

Fiscal Impact

Revenue neutral.