

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1512
By: West, George "Buddy"
Energy Resources
Committee Report (Amended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In the 2001 legislative session, the Railroad Commission was given the authority to strengthen its rules regarding public education and liaison. Public education and liaison is an important element in pipeline safety by providing information to the public regarding pipelines and how to react in the event of an emergency. The State of Texas has provided through the Division of Emergency Management, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC) in each of the 254 counties in Texas. The LEPCs are established to help plan and coordinate for local emergencies.

Currently, there is no mandate for the LEPCs to conduct meetings. By establishing mandated meeting requirement, pipeline operators would be afforded the opportunity to meet with the LEPCs on a periodic basis to provide information regarding the pipeline facilities in the counties. There are some LEPCs in the state that are very active in this area already, and have proven to be very effective in carrying out the education and liaison requirements for pipeline operators, as well as increasing the awareness regarding pipelines and response to pipeline emergencies.

HB 1512 would direct the Railroad Commission to participate in the LEPC activities. The Railroad Commission personnel would attend the meetings and provide regulatory information as part of the meeting presentation, and help coordinate between the LEPCs and the pipeline operators. This could be done in conjunction with the Commissions efforts in underground damage prevention.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Section 418.106, Government Code, is amended by adding Subsection (d).

Section 418.106, Government Code is amended by adding Subsection (d) states that each local or inter-jurisdictional agency shall hold at least one public meeting each year to share information about its emergency management plan. Each agency shall provide written notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting, no later than the fifth day before the meeting, to the pipeline safety section of the gas services division of the Railroad Commission.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect September 1, 2003

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. Section 418.106(e) is amended to allow companies to protect certain sensitive emergency

response information that companies need to keep private in order to maintain healthy security levels.