

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2650

By: Kuempel

Defense Affairs and State-Federal Relations
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Texas' public safety and emergency response teams are equipped with radio communication systems that operate on different frequencies, which can hinder communications with each other during an emergency. The mandate and authority to develop an integrated system has been in place since 1999; however, the Interagency Radio Work Group assigned to carry out the task has been unable to reach any consensus even when the Legislature applied greater pressure during the 2001 session. HB 2650 will create a Public Safety Wireless Communications Council which is to research and find solutions to achieving interoperability among state agencies and local entities. The bill puts time lines in place to ensure that a solution is reached as soon as possible.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. C.S.H.B. 2650 creates the Public Safety Wireless Communications Council. Membership of the Council consists of the administrative heads of eight interested departments and associations. The Council is tasked with advising, overseeing, the Department of Public Safety in the development and administration of a strategic plan to design, implement and maintain a statewide integrated wireless communications system for state and various local agencies. They will also research and identify the wireless communications interoperability needs of state agencies. Funding for systems would be from any available state and/or federal funds for homeland security.

SECTION 2. The Council shall hold its first meeting not later than December 1, 2003. The Section requires the Council to provide a report to the Legislature by no later than September 1, 2004, including the projected cost of implementing and maintaining the system.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003, unless it receives the votes necessary for immediate effect.

COMPARISON OF SUBSTITUTE TO ORIGINAL

The substitute modifies the original version of the bill in that it is a Legislative Council Draft that includes several non-substantive technical and conforming changes with different terminology throughout.

The Substitute modifies the original version of the bill throughout SECTION 1 by removing references to "wireless" communications and substituting "radio" communications to ensure that the Council is able to consider all interoperability solutions. The name of the Council was changed from the original bill by making this word reference change also. The Council will now be called the Public Safety Radio Communications Council. This name change is made throughout the bill.

The substitute modifies the original version of the bill in SECTION 2 by requiring specific information regarding costs for implementation and maintenance of systems.