

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 3325  
By: Keffer, Jim  
Economic Development  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Access to information and services has traditionally been a challenge for rural Texans. HB 3325 addresses this problem by amending the Government Code to create the Community Telecommunications Alliance Program. The Program directs the Office of Rural Community Affairs along with the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board to coordinate with local communities to fund grants to promote economic development and school health projects.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Office of Rural Community Affairs and the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board in SECTION 1 (Section 487.452, Government Code) of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

HB 3325 requires the Office of Rural Community Affairs and the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board to adopt a memorandum of understanding to establishing the telecommunications alliance program. The program is required to assist local communities in applying for grants, facilitating access to telecommunications services, and creating school health technology projects.

HB 3325 requires the Office of Rural Community Affairs to report to the Legislature the grants and grant recipients of the program.

HB 3325 amends the Utilities Code to add the Community Telecommunications Alliance Program to the list of projects that the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board prioritizes when offering grant money.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2003.

### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE**

The substitute is written in Legislative Council style and format.

The substitute changes the definition of "community telecommunications alliance" to emphasize telecommunications and information services provided through the private sector.

The substitute adds language to ensure that alliances created under this program do not directly compete with local businesses, and telecommunications or information service providers, and that a network created under this program cannot be resold to a direct competitor of a local private sector provider.

The substitute adds economically depressed areas to the list of prioritized service areas.

