

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 1915  
By: Swinford  
Agriculture & Livestock  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The State Firemen's & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas (SFFMA) is the ninth largest trade association in Texas. The 130 year old organization is the oldest and the largest fire service association in the state. Membership included over 1100 fire departments, 17,000+ individual members, and over 80 industrial fire brigades. The SFFMA supports and sponsors the world's largest fire training school, held each summer at Texas A&M University.

Since January 1, 2005, wildfires have consumed 1.9 million acres of land, destroyed 639 homes, and caused more than \$500 million in property damage in the state of Texas. Because there is no central registry for fire departments, it is impossible to know at the regional level what equipment and personnel are available to respond to these regional disasters or other Homeland Security issues. Additionally, without adequate information on the departments, it is difficult to encourage firefighter certification and compliance with safety standards. This bill would create a fire department listing by the Texas Forest Service (Service), which would include a complete list of fire departments and firefighting resources within the state.

### **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. Chapter 614, Government Code amended to add Subchapter H as follows:

Sec. 614.151. PURPOSES. Develop a list of departments and resources in the state; prepare for response to a disaster; support the Statewide Mutual Aid Plan;

Sec. 614.152. DEFINITIONS. Provides definitions for Fire department, Service, State fire agencies, and State fire associations.

Sec. 614.153. ADMINISTRATION OF FIRE DEPARTMENT LISTING. The Service shall establish and maintain listings of departments and be accessible to state fire agencies in carrying out responsibilities.

Sec. 614.154. LISTING REQUIRED. Each fire department shall be listed by service; and provide service information. State fire agencies and associations shall help in the listings.

Sec. 614.155. LISTING COMPONENTS. Listing must contain: department name; department physical address; department mailing address, number of firefighters or any other personnel whose duties involve responding to an emergency incident at the fire department; list of all fire protection equipment.

Sec. 614.156. RENEWAL OF LISTING. Requires the Service to renew the fire department listing annually.

SECTION 2. Texas Forest Service of The Texas A&M University System must establish listing no later than January 1, 2008.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2007.

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## **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2007

## **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE**

The substitute adds "purposes of the subchapter" to subchapter H "Fire Department Listing."

The substitute changes "voluntary fire department" to "fire department" throughout the bill.

The substitute replaces "Volunteer Fire Department and Part-Paid Fire Department" with "Fire Department" in "definitions" and provides a meaning of the Fire Department. The substitute adds "State fire agency" and "State fire association" to definitions and provides what groups will be represented under their definition.

The substitute eliminates the demand for "online" registry throughout the bill and makes the registry a "listing." This listing requires each fire department in this state to be listed with the Service and requires them to provide the listing component stated in the bill. The substitute adds that when making a list of all firefighting equipment, that they use the National Incident Management System guidelines.

The substitute deletes language that was in the original bill in "Registration required" that a volunteer fire department may not engage in firefighting activities involving a regional emergency incident for which the Service provides coordination unless the department maintains a current registration with the Service under this subchapter.

The substitute eliminates a required renewal fee with the Texas Forest Service that was in the original bill and requires the Service to renew the listing annually.

The substitute makes conforming changes throughout the bill to the sections of the code.