

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3444
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County Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In November 2003, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced \$2.2 billion in grant money for state and local first-responders as a result of federal legislation and funding approved earlier that year. The Congressional Record related to the proposed legislation emphasized that the grant money was being approved in response to a need by first-responders, including, fire fighters, law enforcement officials and emergency medical technicians, from state and local governments to have access to homeland security grant information and funding. In Texas, a steering committee established by the Governor's Office through the State Director of Domestic Preparedness determined that the only jurisdictions eligible to receive federal grant monies would be counties and municipalities. This determination ignored the fact that there are over 250 Emergency Services Districts within Texas that provide critical first-responder fire and emergency medical services and are part of the Country's first line of defense in most emergency situations. As a result of this decision, those districts were denied access to these grant funds, which were specifically authorized by the United States Congress to provide funding to first-responder organizations like Emergency Services Districts.

C.S.H.B. 3444 is intended to ensure that Emergency Services Districts within Texas are eligible for all grants that are available to the state for the type of services the districts provide.

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

C.S.H.B. 3444 provides that Emergency Services Districts may apply for, and receive, grants for any district purpose and specifies that Emergency Services Districts are eligible to receive a federal grant.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The original bill was not a Legislative Council draft, and the committee substitute is.

The original creates Section 775.086, Health and Safety Code, and the substitute makes technical changes to this section number because an earlier section of Chapter 775 was available. The substitute also changes the title of the new section from "Eligibility to Receive Federal Grants" to "Grants," and makes other non-substantive revisions to improve the draftsmanship of the bill.