

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 622
By: Carona
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Established by the Legislature in 1968, the Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS) provides a "centralized information system incorporating all Texas natural resource data, socioeconomic data related to natural resources, and indexes related to that data that are collected by state agencies or other entities." Since its inception the information system has been administered by the Texas Water Development Board. Recently, TNRIS has played a role in emergency preparedness and response activities, including working with and providing data to the Governor's Division of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Senate Bill 622 updates state law to reflect TNRIS' expanded role in emergency management activities.

In 1997, the 75th Legislature established the Texas Geographic Information Council (TGIC) as the primary coordinating body for geographic information systems (GIS) in Texas state government. The Council helps further the cost effective use of GIS data and technologies and supports the incorporation of GIS into state agency business functions. TGIC includes 45 members from state, local and federal agencies and universities. The executive director of the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) and the executive administrator of the TWDB serve as the TGIC's executive sponsors. State law requires the TGIC to publish a biennial report on the use of GIS technology by state government, which provides an inventory of GIS projects and activities within state government and makes recommendations on issues related to the use of geospatial data and technologies within the state. The current report deadline of Sept. 1 of even-numbered years is problematic in that it corresponds with the Legislative Appropriations Request process. Senate Bill 622 moves the statutory deadline to November 1 will give TWDB and DIR additional time to work with TGIC members to produce the biennial report and will allow for input to the DIR Biennial Performance Report. The bill also clarifies certain criteria required for inclusion in the report.

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. Amends Sections 16.021(a) and (d), Water Code, as follows:

(a) Includes data related to emergency management in the list of areas for which the Texas Natural Resources Information System acts as a centralized clearinghouse and referral center. Makes conforming changes.

(d) Provides that by November 1, rather than September 1, of each even-numbered year, the Texas Geographic Information Council (TGIC) is required to prepare and provide a report to the Texas Water Development Board, the Department of Information Resources, the governor, and the legislature. Sets forth that this report describes the progress made by each TGIC member entity toward achieving geographic information system goals and in implementing geographic information system initiatives, and recommends additional initiatives to improve state's geographic information systems programs.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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