

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1504
By: Van de Putte
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It is necessary to consider the possible dangers to a school that is in close proximity to a train track if a train derailment were to occur. Rail train accidents can cause direct harm 100 feet away, and an accident that spills chemical or other potentially dangerous materials can affect a larger area. In 2006, there was a total of 1,072 train accidents in Texas. It is critical to prepare response plans to protect the residents of Texas from the possible dangers of an accident. It is particularly important for schools in close proximity to a train track to have a plan to protect their students in the event of a train accident.

This bill requires school districts with schools located within 1,000 yards of a railroad track to establish a policy for responding to train derailments in the district's multihazard emergency operations plan.

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

This bill relates to a school district policy for responding to a train derailment near a district school.

The bill provides that this Act may be cited as the "School Rail Safety Act."

The bill amends Section 37.108, Education Code, by adding Subsection (d) to provide that a school district shall include in its multihazard emergency operations plan a policy for responding to a train derailment near a district school. A school district is only required to adopt such a policy if a district school is located within 1,000 yards of a railroad track, as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line. The school district may use any available community resources in developing such a policy.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.