

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1956
By: Van de Putte
Defense Affairs & State-Federal Relations
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant Program (program) was originally established to aid communities negatively affected by base realignment and closure. Much of the statutory context for the program is obsolete and in need of an update.

As proposed, S.B. 1956 transfers the general powers and duties of the program, including rulemaking authority previously granted to the now-defunct Texas Department of Commerce (department) to the Texas Military Preparedness Commission (commission). The bill also revises the criteria that the commission is required to establish so that it focuses on evaluation-based equity, authorizes applications to the program to be evaluated on the positive effect and job gain, in addition to the adverse effect and job loss, and repeals provisions relating to revolving loans to communities affected by base realignment and closure.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Department of Commerce is transferred to the Texas Military Preparedness Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

SB 1956 amends Chapter 486, Government Code, by defining “commission” as the Texas Military Preparedness Commission and deleting the definition of “Department” which referred to the Texas Department of Commerce and replaces references to the department (Texas Department of Commerce) with the commission (Texas Military Preparedness Commission). Additionally, it changes references from defense-dependent community to defense community.

SB 1956 requires the commission to establish criteria and procedures and award grants equitably based on evaluations. Requires the commission, rather than the department, to adopt rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter. Authorizes a local governmental entity to use the grant proceeds for purchase of facilities insurance, in addition to other items set forth in this section. Provides that the defense economic adjustment assistance panel consists of at least three and not more than five professional full-time employees of the Office of the Governor, rather than the department. Requires the panel to evaluate each application and assign the applicant a score based on the significance of the adverse or positive effect within the applying local governmental entity, including the number of jobs lost or gained in relation to the workforce in the entity's jurisdiction, in addition to other criteria set forth in this section.

Repeals Subchapter B (Revolving Loans to Communities Potentially Affected by Defense Base Reduction Process), Chapter 486, Government Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.