

By: Bonnen

H.B. No. 1493

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment and operation of a severe storm research and planning center.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subtitle H, Title 3, Education Code, is amended by adding Chapter 155 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 155. SEVERE STORM RESEARCH AND PLANNING CENTER

Sec. 155.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Center" means the severe storm research and planning center.

(2) "Commission" means the regional planning commission, council of governments, or similar regional planning agency created under Chapter 391, Local Government Code, whose membership includes the most populous county that borders on the Gulf of Mexico or on a bay or inlet of the Gulf of Mexico.

Sec. 155.002. ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE. The commission shall create a severe storm research and planning center to facilitate research and develop plans, programs, and technology associated with the impact of and response to hurricanes and other severe storms in the Gulf Coast Region and adjacent areas, including:

(1) the development of real-time storm surge forecasting ability for hurricanes and other severe storms;

(2) the development of radar-based rainfall and flood warning systems for urban and coastal areas;

1 (3) the development of public education programs
2 relating to compliance with government-initiated evacuation
3 orders;

4 (4) the assessment of infrastructure risks; and

5 (5) the development of evacuation plans.

6 Sec. 155.003. ADMINISTRATION. (a) The commission shall
7 administer the center.

8 (b) The commission shall appoint an advisory committee to
9 advise the commission regarding the development of priorities,
10 guidelines, and procedures for the implementation of this chapter.
11 The advisory committee must include representatives of:

12 (1) Rice University;

13 (2) the University of Houston;

14 (3) The University of Texas at Austin;

15 (4) Texas A&M University at Galveston;

16 (5) Texas Southern University;

17 (6) The University of Texas at Brownsville;

18 (7) regional planning commissions, councils of
19 governments, or similar regional planning agencies created under
20 Chapter 391, Local Government Code, whose membership includes a
21 municipality or county located in the Gulf Coast Region;

22 (8) engineering and construction firms associated
23 with public works contracts; and

24 (9) the medical profession in a major urban area
25 located in the Gulf Coast Region.

26 (c) The commission and advisory committee may cooperate,
27 coordinate, and share information with a governmental entity or

1 postsecondary educational institution in another state that
2 borders the Gulf of Mexico.

3 (d) The commission, in consultation with the advisory
4 committee, shall adopt guidelines and procedures for the
5 administration of this chapter.

6 Sec. 155.004. CONTRACT. To the extent funding is available
7 and for the purpose of operating, managing, and providing services
8 or facilities for the center, the commission shall contract with a
9 private postsecondary educational institution that:

10 (1) is a member of the Association of American
11 Universities;

12 (2) has an enrollment of at least 3,000 students; and

13 (3) is located in a municipality in the Gulf Coast
14 Region with a population of 1.8 million or more.

15 Sec. 155.005. FUNDING. (a) The commission may receive
16 state-appropriated funds for the purpose of supporting the
17 activities of the center.

18 (b) The commission may solicit and accept gifts, grants, and
19 donations for purposes of this chapter.

20 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
21 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
22 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
23 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
24 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.