

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1026
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Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Following Hurricane Ike's landfall and subsequent devastation, many residents in the affected areas were without power and unable to access essentials, such as food and water. Lack of information, communication, and access to aid relief endangers the lives of people following a disaster or emergency.

C.S.H.B. 1026 authorizes each district within 100 miles of the Gulf of Mexico from which a member of the Texas House of Representatives is elected to form a district volunteer emergency response team to increase the number of trained volunteer responders in the district; assist local government to coordinate information and planning among district residents and local and state government officials; assist local and state government to coordinate distribution of aid during a disaster or emergency; and serve as a source of information to the residents of the district.

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. 1026 amends the Local Government Code to authorize each district within 100 miles of the Gulf of Mexico from which a member of the Texas House of Representatives is elected to form a district volunteer emergency response team to increase the number of trained volunteer responders in the district, assist local government to coordinate information among district residents and local and state government officials, assist local and state government to coordinate distribution of aid during a disaster or emergency, and serve as a source of information to the residents of the district. The bill authorizes a district volunteer emergency response team to include licensed amateur radio operators, persons who have a medical background, and persons who have completed Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Incident Command System training classes 100, 200, 700, and 800A.

C.S.H.B. 1026 requires the team to collaborate with county and municipal emergency management entities to determine the scope of work and duties of the team. The bill authorizes each communications center to contain an amateur radio operator, radio equipment, and wireless Internet access. The bill authorizes a medical triage transport staging site to be equipped with a generator; include restroom facilities, showers, and a food preparation location; have available an amateur radio operator; have equipment that can produce ice; and be located in an area not subject to flooding during a category four hurricane. The bill requires the team to coordinate with county and municipal emergency management entities and the elected state representative representing the district about the location of the medical triage transport staging site.

C.S.H.B. 1026 establishes that each team that complies with the requirements of this bill may be eligible to receive money appropriated by the state of Texas. The bill authorizes the county in which most of the district residents reside to administer the team's funds, make purchases for the

team, and provide the team with appropriate volunteer equipment. The bill requires the state representative whose district creates a team to serve as a liaison for the team and authorizes each state senator that represents the district to also serve as a liaison.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 1026 differs from the original by authorizing each district within 100 miles of the Gulf of Mexico from which a member of the Texas House of Representatives is elected to form a district volunteer emergency response team, whereas the original authorizes each district from which a member of the Texas House of Representatives is elected to form a district emergency response team. The substitute clarifies that the response team's purpose includes assisting local government to coordinate information among district residents and local and state government officials, and assisting local and state government to coordinate distribution of aid during a disaster or emergency, rather than coordinating these tasks independently as in the original.

C.S.H.B. 1026 authorizes, rather than requires as in the original, each response team to include certain members, and removes a provision from the original specifying the minimum number of those members. The substitute authorizes the team to include persons who have completed Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Incident Command System training classes 100, 200, 700, and 800A, rather than training classes 300 and 400 as in the original, and removes a requirement in the original that each team member complete training classes 100, 200, 700, and 800A. The substitute removes a provision in the original requiring a team for a district located within 100 miles of the Gulf of Mexico to have at least 30 members between June 1 and November 30.

C.S.H.B. 1026 requires the team to collaborate with county and municipal emergency management entities to determine the scope of work and duties of the team, whereas the original requires the team to collaborate with FEMA, the office of the governor, and other state and federal agencies to complete specified tasks. The substitute removes provisions in the original relating to a requirement that a team file with each municipality and county located within the district an emergency operations plan that meets FEMA guidelines.

C.S.H.B. 1026 authorizes, rather than requires as in the original, each communications center to contain an amateur radio operator, radio equipment, and wireless Internet access. The substitute authorizes, rather than requires as in the original, the medical triage transport staging site to be equipped with a generator, rather than a generator that has the capacity to power medical apparatuses used for treating life-threatening illnesses as in the original, among other specifications. The substitute removes a requirement in the original that the medical triage transport staging site house residents with medical conditions whose health care treatment requires the use of electricity. The substitute differs from the original by requiring the team to coordinate with county and municipal emergency management entities and the elected state representative representing the district about the location of the medical triage transport staging site, whereas the original requires the team to notify the emergency management organizations and each state and federal elected official representing the district about the location of the medical triage transport staging site. The substitute removes a provision in the original requiring the team to coordinate emergency plans with health care providers in the district to ensure the delivery of health care during a disaster or emergency.

C.S.H.B. 1026 establishes that each team that complies with the requirements of this bill may be eligible to receive money appropriated by the state, whereas the original makes each team that complies with the requirements of this bill eligible to receive money appropriated by the state.

The bill authorizes, rather than requires as in the original, the county in which most of the district residents reside to administer the team's funds, make purchases for the team, and provide the team with appropriate volunteer equipment. The substitute removes a provision in the original specifying the equipment required to be provided to the team.