

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 4300
By: Herrero
Energy Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, the operator of a natural gas pipeline is required to hold an annual meeting with emergency responders to provide information relating to gas pipeline facilities and responding to a natural gas pipeline emergency. The law requires a pipeline operator to conduct a meeting in person, which must be set up through mailing a written request, sending a facsimile transmission, or making at least one phone call. If a meeting cannot be conducted in person, an operator must try to conduct the meeting by phone using such methods to set up the meeting. If a meeting cannot be conducted in person or over the phone, the pipeline operator may then send the information to the emergency responder in order to satisfy the requirement to conduct these liaison activities.

Texas adopted the existing statute prior to major changes in federal and state regulatory policy that redefined public awareness requirements of pipeline operators. The bill amends current law to permit pipeline operators greater flexibility in conducting liaison activities. Proposed changes will bring Texas law more in line with new federal and state regulatory requirements and will allow operators to get key pipeline safety information to emergency responders in a more efficient, expedited, and less burdensome manner.

H.B. 4300 authorizes an operator of a natural gas pipeline or the operator's representative to conduct community liaison activities by holding a telephone conference with the appropriate officials or delivering the community liaison information required to be conveyed by certified mail, return receipt requested. The bill removes provisions that specify other methods.

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

H.B. 4300 amends the Utilities Code to authorize an operator of a natural gas pipeline or the operator's representative to conduct community liaison activities by one of two methods: holding a telephone conference with the appropriate officials or delivering the community liaison information required to be conveyed by certified mail. The bill removes provisions that specify several other methods by which the operator or the operator's representative may conduct community liaison activities.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.