

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 988
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Natural Resources
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Changes to the climate are happening much more quickly than scientists originally estimated. Texas is in the midst of one of the most severe droughts in the history of the state. There is a very real danger of sea level increases that will endanger coastal communities and infrastructure. Four hurricanes have struck the Texas coast in the last four years. It is imperative that the state begin planning in order to adapt to these climate changes.

As proposed, S.B. 988 creates a new chapter in the Health and Safety Code that requires 14 state agencies to produce climate adaptation plans every other year assessing that entity's role with respect to climate change. The agencies are the Department of Agriculture, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the General Land Office, the Health and Human Services Commission, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the Department of Insurance, the Parks and Wildlife Department, the Department of Public Safety, the Public Utility Commission of Texas, the Comptroller of Public Accounts, the Department of Transportation, the Forest Service, and the Water Development Board.

S.B. 988 requires each climate adaptation plan to include a climate change vulnerability assessment; a review of existing programs in the context of anticipated changing climate conditions; specific steps necessary for the entity to fulfill its mission during the anticipated climate change; an analysis of the effects implementing such steps on the entity's budget during the next two, five, and 10 years; potential sources of funding to support the entity's efforts to adapt to climate change; and a statewide strategy to monitor the continuing effects of climate change.

The bill also requires entities in developing climate adaptation plans, to consult at least one institution of higher education as well as the most current assessment report produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subtitle C, Title 5, Health and Safety Code, by adding Chapter 393, as follows:

CHAPTER 393. CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN

Sec. 393.001. PARTICIPATING ENTITIES. Requires certain entities, not later than September 1 of each even-numbered year, to publish a climate adaptation plan that will assess the entity's role with respect to climate change.

Sec. 393.002. PLAN. (a) Requires each climate adaptation plan to include certain information, strategies, and assessments.

(b) Requires each entity, in developing a climate adaptation plan, to consider the most current assessment report created by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change and consult with at least one institution of higher education, as defined by Section 61.003 (Definitions), Education Code.

(c) Requires each entity subject to this section, not later than September 1 of each even-numbered year, to post the entity's climate adaptation plan on a publicly accessible Internet website and electronically submit a copy of the plan to the governor, lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of representatives; the presiding officer of each standing committee or subcommittee of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over environmental matters; and the executive director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

(d) Provides that each climate adaptation plan is subject to audit by the state auditor in accordance with Chapter 321 (State Auditor), Government Code.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.