

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1136
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Natural Resources
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current coastal erosion response plan funding decisions are based on a variety of criteria, including, but not limited to, the quality of project proposal, the economic impact of the erosion being addressed, the ability of the local partner to match state funds, the need for the project and geographic location. A cost-benefit analysis is done on the backside of the project evaluate its economic benefit.

A cost-benefit analysis needs to be done prior to selecting projects to determine where there is the greatest need and economic impact of the limited funding available. Texas has 367 miles of coastline, much of which will never be developed, either because it is part of a local, state, or federal park or located in a Coastal Resources Barrier Act (CBRA) zone or because development is economically feasible.

Existing criteria for funding considerations can result in numerous smaller projects that may not have long-term benefits. The designation of critical erosion areas by the commissioner of the General Land Office (commissioner) would provide for more focused funding decisions regarding the allocation of limited resources. An up-front, coast-wide cost-benefit analysis would also contribute to more focused funding decisions. Focused funding will allow for large scale projects that provide longer lasting benefits and protection and also provide economies of scale, maximizing the benefits of state funds.

As proposed, S.B. 1136 authorizes the commissioner to designate critical erosion areas in the state's coastal erosion response plan and conduct a coast-wide analysis of the costs and benefits of coastal erosion avoidance, remediation, and planning for the purpose of designating critical erosion areas, including certain factors the commissioner considers in designating the critical erosion areas.

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 Section 33.602, Natural Resources Code, by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (e), as follows:

(b) Requires that the coastal erosion response plan identify critical coastal erosion areas designated by the commissioner of the General Land Office (commissioner) and prioritize coastal erosion response studies and projects so that benefits are balanced among areas throughout the coast designated by the commissioner as critical coastal erosion areas.

(e) Authorizes the commissioner to conduct a coast-wide analysis of the costs and benefits of coastal erosion avoidance, remediation, and planning in order to determine which areas should be designated as critical coastal erosion areas and guide the allocation of resources. Authorizes an analysis under this subsection to consider historical erosion rates in an area, the elevation of an area adjacent to the shoreline, the presence of critical infrastructure in an area adjacent to the shoreline, the population density of an area adjacent to the shoreline, the presence of economic activity conducted in an area adjacent

to the shoreline, the presence of critical natural resources in an area adjacent to the shoreline, anthropogenic contributions to erosion, and any other factor indentified as relevant by the commissioner.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2009.