

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2292
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State Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In the wake of Hurricanes Rita, Dolly, and Ike, it became clear that rapid, efficient, and effective programs to provide temporary and permanent housing for Texans whose homes are damaged or destroyed by natural disasters are woefully lacking. Significant amounts of federal block grant funds are being made available to Texas to repair and rebuild homes damaged in the hurricanes. For future state and federal funds to be efficiently spent to address hurricanes and natural disasters, new models of building technologies and new hurricane resistant housing designs are needed and need to be made available to both the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs and local governments working to establish new programs to rebuild damaged homes.

Using the lessons learned in the aftermath of these hurricanes, measures need to be taken to encourage the development of a model reconstruction plan for future reconstruction efforts to increase the effective and efficient delivery of natural disaster recovery services by state agencies and to include experts in residential construction technologies in developing model solutions for this rebuilding.

S.B. 2292 establishes a natural disaster housing reconstruction advisory committee to assess the effectiveness of current temporary and permanent disaster housing programs and to propose more effective solutions. The bill requires the advisory committee to develop a natural disaster housing reconstruction plan for Texas to better address the reconstruction and rebuilding of housing damaged by a natural disaster. Additionally, the bill requires the executive director of the department and the natural disaster housing reconstruction advisory committee, using the natural disaster housing reconstruction plan, to develop housing reconstruction demonstration pilot programs for three areas affected by one of the three most recent federally declared natural disasters.

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

S.B. 2292 amends the Government Code to establish a natural disaster housing reconstruction initiative to encourage the development of a model plan for future reconstruction efforts, as stated in the purpose of the bill. The bill requires the executive director of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to appoint a natural disaster housing reconstruction advisory committee composed of representatives from appropriate local, state, and federal entities and organizations and nonprofit organizations. The bill requires the advisory committee to develop a natural disaster housing reconstruction plan and requires the advisory committee, in developing this plan, to evaluate existing systems of providing temporary housing to victims of natural disasters and develop alternative systems to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness; evaluate existing models for providing permanent replacement housing to victims of natural disasters; design alternatives to existing models to improve the sustainability, affordability, desirability,

and quality of housing rebuilt in the event of future natural disasters; evaluate economic circumstances of elderly, disabled, and low-income victims of natural disasters and develop models for providing affordable replacement housing; recommend programs for the rapid and efficient large-scale production of temporary and permanent replacement housing following a natural disaster; and encourage the participation, coordination, and involvement of appropriate federal organizations. The bill exempts the advisory committee from state law applicable to state agency advisory committees.

S.B. 2292 requires the director and the advisory committee, using the natural disaster housing reconstruction plan, to develop housing reconstruction demonstration pilot programs for three areas, each of which was affected by one of the three most recent federally declared natural disasters. The bill requires the pilot programs to provide for the replacement of at least 20 houses in each area to test the feasibility of implementing the plan in the large-scale production of replacement housing for victims of federally declared natural disasters.

S.B. 2292 requires the department to provide to an interested council of government, county, or local government eligible for funding for disaster recovery under the community development block grant program information regarding a pilot program and assistance in implementing a pilot program. The bill authorizes the department, at the discretion of the board, to implement a pilot program in any of the three most recently federally declared disaster areas in which a pilot program has not been implemented by a council of government, county, or local government. The bill authorizes the department to use any available funds to implement the pilot program.

S.B. 2292 requires the executive director of the department to submit the natural disaster housing reconstruction plan to the governing board of the department not later than January 1, 2010. The bill requires the executive director to provide housing reconstruction demonstration pilot program information to an interested council of government, county, or local government eligible for funding for disaster recovery under the community development block grant program not later than March 1, 2010.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.