

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 2292
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In the wake of Hurricanes Rita, Dolly, and Ike, it has become clear that rapid, efficient, and effective programs to provide temporary and permanent housing for Texans whose homes have been damaged or destroyed by natural disasters are woefully lacking. This legislation encourages 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. 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 will be needed. This bill brings together experts in residential construction technologies to propose model solutions for this rebuilding. These model solutions would be made available to both the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and to local governments working to establish new programs to rebuild damaged homes. This bill ensures that the lessons learned in Texas after the recent three hurricanes are used to redesign the future housing disaster reconstruction and rebuilding response in Texas. The advisory committee's recommendations will not be mandates, but recommendations of the best practices that local and state government may choose to adopt.

As proposed, S.B. 2292 establishes a natural disaster housing reconstruction advisory committee (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 study and develop prototypes for Texas to better address the reconstruction and rebuilding of natural disaster damaged housing.

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. Provides that the purpose of this Act is 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. Provides that this Act is not meant to affect ongoing reconstruction efforts.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 418, Government Code, by adding Subchapter J, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. NATURAL DISASTER HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION INITIATIVE

Sec. 418.301. NATURAL DISASTER HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) Sets forth the composition of the natural disaster housing reconstruction advisory committee (advisory committee).

(b) Requires the advisory committee to develop a natural disaster reconstruction plan. Sets forth the required tasks of the advisory committee in developing this plan.

(c) Requires the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) to provide funding for the advisory committee through TDHCA's research funds.

(d) Provides that Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees) does not apply to the advisory committee.

Sec. 418.302. NATURAL DISASTER HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION COORDINATOR. (a) Requires the governor to appoint an employee of the office of the governor or the administrative head of a state agency as the natural disaster housing reconstruction coordinator (coordinator). Provides that the coordinator serves at the pleasure of the governor.

(b) Sets forth the required duties of the coordinator.

(c) Requires the agency that employs the coordinator to provide funding for the coordinator position using money from any source that is authorized to be used to respond to a natural disaster.

Sec. 418.303. HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM. (a) Requires the coordinator and advisory committee, using the natural disaster reconstruction plan developed under this subchapter, to develop and implement a housing reconstruction demonstration program (program) in three areas previously affected by a natural disaster. Requires that the program provide for the replacement of at least 20 houses in each area to test the feasibility of implementing the plan in the production of replacement housing for victims of natural disasters.

(b) Requires that the program be implemented using available funds from the housing trust fund or any other federal or state funds available.

Sec. 418.304. ASSISTANCE AND STAFFING. Requires the division of emergency management in the office of the governor, with the assistance of the TDHCA and the Office of Rural and Community Affairs, to assist the coordinator and advisory committee as necessary, including by providing appropriate staff.

SECTION 3. (a) Requires the governor, not later than October 1, 2009, to appoint the coordinator under Section 418.302, Government Code, as added by this Act.

(b) Requires the coordinator, not later than 14 days after appointment, to call an initial meeting of the advisory committee under Section 418.301, Government Code, as added by this Act.

(c) Requires the advisory committee, not later than 60 days after appointment of the coordinator, to develop a preliminary natural disaster reconstruction plan under Section 418.301(b), Government Code, as added by this Act.

(d) Requires the advisory committee, not later than December 1, 2009, to submit the final natural disaster reconstruction plan.

(e) Requires the advisory committee, not later than February 1, 2010, to implement the program established under Section 418.303, Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2009.