

By: Merritt

H.B. No. 3333

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to the creation and operation of the Texas-Louisiana  
3 border region economic development steering committee; authorizing  
4 an assessment.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the orderly economic  
7 development of the area of this state near the Texas-Louisiana  
8 border is of concern to the entire state.

9 SECTION 2. Chapter 2056, Government Code, is amended by  
10 adding Section 2056.012 to read as follows:

11 Sec. 2056.012. TEXAS-LOUISIANA BORDER REGION ECONOMIC  
12 DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE. (a) In this section:

13 (1) "Committee" means the Texas-Louisiana border  
14 region economic development steering committee.

15 (2) "Electric Utility" means an investor-owned  
16 electric utility, a municipally owned electric utility, or an  
17 electric cooperative.

18 (3) "Texas-Louisiana border region" has the meaning  
19 assigned by Section 2056.002.

20 (b) The committee consists of:

21 (1) the county judges of the five most populous  
22 counties in the Texas-Louisiana border region;

23 (2) the county judge of any other county in the  
24 Texas-Louisiana border region, if the commissioners court elects to

1 join the committee; and

2 (3) any representatives from economic development  
3 councils serving the Texas-Louisiana border region, as selected by  
4 the committee.

5 (c) The committee shall develop a strategic plan for the  
6 economic development of the Texas-Louisiana border region, in the  
7 same manner as a state agency is required by this chapter to make a  
8 strategic plan for its operations, and may take action to implement  
9 the strategic plan.

10 (d) The members of the committee shall elect one member as  
11 presiding officer. The presiding officer may select another member  
12 to preside in the absence of the presiding officer. The presiding  
13 officer shall call at least one meeting of the committee each year  
14 and may call other meetings as the presiding officer determines are  
15 appropriate. A member of the committee is not entitled to  
16 compensation for serving as a member but is entitled to  
17 reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred while serving as a  
18 member. The committee shall adopt rules for its proceedings and  
19 appoint an executive committee. The committee may employ and  
20 compensate persons to carry out the powers and duties of the  
21 committee. Chapter 171, Local Government Code, applies to a member  
22 of the committee in the same manner as that chapter applies to a  
23 local public official.

24 (e) The committee is a public body and a political  
25 subdivision of the state exercising public and essential  
26 governmental functions and has all the powers necessary or  
27 convenient to carry out the purposes of this section. The

1 committee, in the exercise of powers under this section, is  
2 performing only governmental functions and is a governmental unit  
3 within the meaning of Chapter 101, Civil Practice and Remedies  
4 Code.

5 (f) The committee is subject to Chapter 325 (Texas Sunset  
6 Act). Unless continued in existence as provided by that chapter,  
7 the committee is abolished and this section expires September 1,  
8 2021.

9 (g) Service on the committee by a county judge is an  
10 additional duty of the county judge's office.

11 (h) The committee may sue and be sued in all courts, may  
12 institute and prosecute suits without giving security for costs,  
13 and may appeal from a judgment without giving a supersedeas or cost  
14 bond. An action at law or in equity against the committee may be  
15 brought in any county in the Texas-Louisiana border region.

16 (i) The committee may acquire by grant, purchase, gift,  
17 devise, lease, or otherwise and may hold, use, sell, lease, or  
18 dispose of real and personal property, licenses, patents, rights,  
19 and interests necessary, convenient, or useful for the full  
20 exercise of its powers.

21 (j) The committee may enter into a joint ownership agreement  
22 with any person.

23 (k) The committee may make contracts, leases, and  
24 agreements with, and accept grants and loans from, the United  
25 States, this state, agencies and political subdivisions of this  
26 state or another state of the United States, and other persons and  
27 entities and may perform any act necessary for the full exercise of

1 the powers vested in it.

2 (1) Notwithstanding Chapter 551, the committee may hold an  
3 open or closed meeting by telephone conference call. The meeting is  
4 subject to the notice requirements applicable to other meetings.  
5 The notice of the meeting must specify as the location of the  
6 meeting the location where meetings of the committee are usually  
7 held. Each part of the meeting that is required to be open to the  
8 public shall be audible to the public at the location specified in  
9 the notice and shall be audio recorded. The audio recording shall be  
10 made available to the public.

11 (m) The committee may solicit and accept gifts and grants  
12 from any public or private source for purposes of this section.

13 (n) The committee may require an electric utility that  
14 provides retail electric service in the Texas-Louisiana border  
15 region to pay to the committee an assessment to be used to pay the  
16 costs of the committee.

17 (o) The committee shall determine the amount of the  
18 assessment for each electric utility so that the electric utility  
19 pays a proportion of the total costs equal to the proportion of the  
20 electric energy the electric utility delivers to retail customers  
21 in the Texas-Louisiana border region as compared to the total  
22 amount of electric energy all electric utilities deliver in the  
23 Texas-Louisiana border region.

24 (p) An electric utility subject to this section shall  
25 provide, as requested by the committee, any information the  
26 committee determines is necessary to comply with this section.

27 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.