

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
83R16674 VOO-F

H.B. 3096
By: Thompson, Senfronia (Elife)
Business & Commerce
5/14/2013
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Emergency notification systems are used by public entities to provide information to the public regarding events ranging from flood warnings to notices that water will be turned off for a few hours for maintenance work. These systems communicate via phone messages, text messages and e-mail. Today's telecommunications advances allow for rapid, efficient deployment of messages to get information out quickly.

Current law places requirements on what public service providers must have in their emergency notification systems. Public service providers are defined as entities providing essential products or services to the public that are regulated under the Natural Resources, Utilities, and Water Codes, including common carriers, telecommunications providers, and other entities providing or producing heat, light, power, or water. While systems for large cities like Houston or Dallas may desire more robust systems, those found in smaller areas servicing a local municipal utility district, for example, should not require such large-scale systems.

H.B. 3096 exempts providers serving 250,000 or fewer customers from the extensive regulations, while leaving in place the more complex system requirements for larger public service providers. This will allow more cost-effective options for smaller public service providers.

H.B. 3096 amends current law relating to an exemption from the use of an emergency notification system by certain public service providers.

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 418.192(h), Government Code, to provide that the requirements of this section (Communications by Public Service Providers During Disasters and Emergencies) do not apply to a public service provider serving 250,000 or fewer customers, or an emergency notification system that is in use by a public service provider on June 1, 2011.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.