

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1708
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Government Organization
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 2007, the Texas Legislature authorized the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS) to purchase land for the purpose of constructing a new crime lab in the El Paso area. After a significant search for property, on March 18, 2009, DPS closed on 3.22 acres of property in east El Paso.

In August 2009, in response to a Deloitte study, DPS created six regions, and El Paso became the location of the new regional headquarters. As a result of the new regional boundaries, DPS evaluated the property along with its long-term mission critical needs for the area and determined that the site was not operationally feasible and posed undue risks by placing a small number of noncommissioned staff in a standalone facility with considerable amounts of contraband and no law enforcement presence.

DPS continued its search and in late 2012, Fort Bliss requested assistance from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) on several road issues. As part of this work, TxDOT is helping DPS secure 30 acres of Fort Bliss land. Transferring this property to State of Texas ownership requires approval by the United States Congress. Congressional approval is not anticipated until 2016. In the meantime, DPS would like to proceed with the project under a long-term lease with Fort Bliss and would still seek title to the property.

As proposed, S.B. 1708 amends current law relating to the acquisition of certain real property in El Paso for the construction of facilities for the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas.

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 Subchapter L, Chapter 2166, Government Code, by adding Section 2166.554, as follows:

Sec. 2166.554. LEASE OF FEDERAL PROPERTY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES FOR DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY. (a) Authorizes the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS) to enter into a long-term lease of a portion of federal real property known as Fort Bliss, located in the county of El Paso, and composed of approximately 30 acres adjacent to Railroad Drive and Loop 375.

(b) Provides that a lease entered into under Subsection (a):

(1) is for the use and benefit of this state; and

(2) is authorized to be for a period or term until the real property is donated to DPS.

(c) Requires that a new regional headquarters and other facilities for DPS, including an evidence processing center and a driver's license office, be constructed on the property described by Subsection (a).

(d) Provides that Section 2166.054(a) does not apply to the acquisition of property for and the construction of the headquarters and facilities described by Subsection (c).

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2013.