

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1125
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Energy Resources
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note that there are currently over 1,500 colonias in Texas with an aggregate population of over 350,000. Previous legislators have worked diligently to protect these vulnerable communities by ensuring access to certain water and wastewater infrastructure. Although great strides have been made in this effort, the parties contend that access to natural gas is one area where the legislature can continue to advocate for these communities, and the parties note that such advocacy could help job creation in the natural gas industry. C.S.H.B. 1125 seeks to address these issues.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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

C.S.H.B. 1125 requires the Railroad Commission of Texas to conduct a study on the availability of natural gas utility service in each county in Texas that borders the United Mexican States and has a population of more than 800,000. The bill requires the railroad commission, in conducting the study, to identify in each county each census-designated place that has a population of at least 500 and that lacks natural gas utility service, to consider the reasons for the lack of availability of natural gas utility service in each identified census-designated place, to estimate the cost of expanding availability of natural gas utility service in each identified census-designated place, and to study methods for making natural gas utility service available throughout each county. The bill requires the railroad commission to issue a written report by November 30, 2016, to the legislature, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the presiding officers of the standing committees of the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the railroad commission that includes the railroad commission's findings and recommendations relating to changes in policies, rules, and statutes necessary to provide for or expedite the extension of natural gas utility service to each county covered by the study that lacks that service. The bill's provisions expire December 1, 2016.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1125 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. DEFINITION. In this Act, "commission" means the Railroad Commission of Texas.

SECTION 2. SCOPE OF STUDY. The commission shall conduct a study on the availability of natural gas utility service in this state. In conducting the study, the commission shall:

- (1) identify each area of this state that lacks natural gas utility service;
- (2) consider the reasons for the lack of availability of natural gas utility service in each area identified in Subdivision (1) of this section;
- (3) estimate the cost of expanding availability of natural gas utility service in each area identified in Subdivision (1) of this section; and
- (4) study methods for making natural gas utility service available throughout this state.

SECTION 3. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS. (a) The commission shall issue a written report to the legislature, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house, and the presiding officers of the standing committees of the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the commission that includes the commission's findings and recommendations relating to changes in policies, rules, and statutes necessary to provide for or expedite the extension of natural gas utility service to areas of this state that lack that service.

(b) The report must be issued by November 30, 2016.

SECTION 4. EXPIRATION. This Act

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 2. SCOPE OF STUDY. The commission shall conduct a study on the availability of natural gas utility service in each county in this state that borders the United Mexican States and has a population of more than 800,000. In conducting the study, the commission shall:

- (1) identify in each county each census-designated place that has a population of at least 500 and that lacks natural gas utility service;
- (2) consider the reasons for the lack of availability of natural gas utility service in each census-designated place identified in Subdivision (1) of this section;
- (3) estimate the cost of expanding availability of natural gas utility service in each census-designated place identified in Subdivision (1) of this section; and
- (4) study methods for making natural gas utility service available throughout each county.

SECTION 3. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS. (a) The commission shall issue a written report to the legislature, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house, and the presiding officers of the standing committees of the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the commission that includes the commission's findings and recommendations relating to changes in policies, rules, and statutes necessary to provide for or expedite the extension of natural gas utility service to each county described by Section 2 of this Act that lacks that service.

(b) The report must be issued by November 30, 2016.

SECTION 4. Same as introduced version.

expires December 1, 2016.

SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE. This
Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

SECTION 5. Same as introduced version.