

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1687
By: Faircloth
Land & Resource Management
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

While the Texas Gulf Coast is a vital part of Texas' vibrant economy, its location makes the region and its people vulnerable to hurricanes and other damaging weather events. According to interested parties, the region is home to various lucrative industries, including healthcare, tourism, maritime activity, education, aerospace, chemical, and oil and gas, and also to one of the largest and most important concentrations of refineries in the nation. In addition to the vast economic interests in the area, the region hosts environmental interests and recreational activities, such as boating and fishing. The parties note the importance of protecting these industries and interests that are vital to the health of Texas' economy. H.B. 1687 seeks to provide for the study of a protection concept developed in response to the extensive surge damage caused by previous hurricanes in Texas.

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

H.B. 1687 requires the legislature to establish a joint interim committee to continue to study the feasibility and desirability of creating and maintaining a coastal barrier system in Texas that includes a series of gates and barriers to prevent storm surge damage to gulf beaches or coastal ports, industry, or property. The bill establishes the composition of the committee and requires the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house of representatives to jointly designate a chair or, alternatively, designate two co-chairs from among the committee membership. The bill authorizes the committee to adopt rules necessary to carry out the committee's duties and requires the committee, not later than December 1, 2016, to report to the governor and the legislature the findings of the study and any recommendations developed by the committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.