

MINUTES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

11:00 AM

Victoria College, Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts, Victoria, TX

Pursuant to a notice posted in accordance with Senate Rule 11.10 and 11.18, a public hearing of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations was held on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, in the Victoria, TX.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., Chair
Senator Paul Bettencourt, Vice Chair
Senator Sylvia Garcia
Senator Don Huffines
Senator Van Taylor

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Donna Campbell
Senator José Menéndez

The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:07 AM.

The Chair made opening remarks. The Chair recognized Senator Lois Kolkhorst, Senate District 18, for opening remarks. The Chair recognized the members of the Committee for opening remarks.

A quorum was present at 11:28 AM.

The Chair introduced Committee staff.

The Chair announced that the Committee will be operating under the rules adopted during the 85th Regular Session. Senator Bettencourt moved that the Committee continue to operate under those rules for the duration of the 85th Legislative Interim; without objection, it was so ordered.

Dr. David Hinds, President of Victoria College, and the Honorable Paul Polasek, Mayor of the City of Victoria, gave welcoming remarks.

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The Chair laid out the following interim charges related to Hurricane Harvey:

Examine and report on ways to improve the coordination of rebuilding housing and infrastructure following a natural disaster, including evaluating additional cost effective options for FEMA to utilize in providing direct housing assistance immediately following a disaster, creation of comprehensive lists of housing opportunities or web portals to disseminate information to survivors, ways to automatically waive local government regulations to facilitate rebuilding, and additional local resources available for rebuilding efforts.

Monitor the distribution of federal disaster relief funds related to housing and infrastructure, including community development block grant (CDBG) funds, to ensure the timely dissemination of monies by state entities to local governments for reconstruction efforts. Develop recommendations for any statutory changes necessary to improve the efficiency of disaster recovery efforts, maximize housing and infrastructure funds, and ensure cooperation between private and government partners.

Review and recommend options to expedite debris removal, including cutting unnecessary regulation and streamlining the process.

Identify and report on existing disaster training opportunities available for local officials and make recommendations for training programs that equip them to efficiently interact with state and federal agencies during times of disaster.

The Chair opened invited testimony on the interim charges related to Hurricane Harvey.

Invited testimony was heard. Witnesses testifying and registering are shown on the attached list.

Senator Bettencourt assumed the chair.

Senator Lucio resumed the chair.

The Chair moved that invited testimony be temporarily closed to take up public testimony. The Chair opened public testimony.

Public testimony was heard. Witnesses testifying and registering are shown on the attached list.

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The Chair moved that public testimony be closed.

The Chair moved the Committee stand at ease.

At 3:24 PM, Senator Bettencourt reconvened the Committee. Senator Bettencourt reopened invited testimony.

Senator Lucio assumed presiding duties.

Invited testimony was heard. Witnesses testifying and registering are shown on the attached list.

Senator Bettencourt assumed the chair.

Senator Lucio resumed the chair.

The Chair moved that invited testimony be closed.

There being no further business, at 4:44 PM Senator Taylor, V., moved that the Committee stand recessed subject to the call of the chair. Without objection, it was so ordered.

Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., Chair

Dilip Kanuga, Clerk