

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 70
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Agriculture & Livestock
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that crops in Texas are subject to diseases and pests which carry an economic cost to the state. C.S.H.B. 70 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Department of Agriculture to include in its strategic plan of operation a goal of preventing crop diseases and plant pests 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

C.S.H.B. 70 amends the Agriculture Code to require the Department of Agriculture (TDA) to include in its required strategic plan of operation a goal of preventing crop diseases and plant pests in Texas by:

- improving the TDA's preventative management practices concerning crop diseases and plant pests;
- increasing the performance of activities directly related to crop disease and plant pest prevention;
- creating and implementing a strong surveillance program that includes certain activities;
- evaluating the TDA's diagnostic procedures to ensure the performance of diagnostic evaluations and investigations occurs timely and accurately;
- improving the effectiveness of the TDA's control and eradication methods;
- evaluating and expanding, if necessary, the TDA's emergency management activities related to crop diseases and plant pests; and
- addressing how the TDA will educate farmers, agricultural producers, and communities that sustain agriculture in Texas about crop disease and plant pest prevention.

The bill requires the TDA, using existing funds, to include in the first strategic plan of operation issued after the bill's effective date the goal and methods of implementing the goal required by the bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 70 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes the prevention of plant pests in Texas as a goal that the TDA is required to include in its strategic plan of operation.