

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1312
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Agriculture & Livestock
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been reported that there is a critical need for the state to assist the border region to better address current and emerging public health threats, such as zoonotic diseases or vector-borne diseases which are transmitted by mosquitos. It has been noted that these health threats are exacerbated by issues in the region such as a lack of licensed mosquito control applicators, the constant inflow of vectors from Mexico, the prevalence of illegal dumping, and a lack of resources and tax base. S.B. 1312 seeks to address these issues by setting out provisions relating to a noncommercial applicator license for mosquito control in border counties and relating to vector-borne and zoonotic disease mitigation in border counties.

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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Department of Agriculture in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1312 amends the Agriculture Code to require the Department of Agriculture (TDA) by rule to provide for the issuance of a noncommercial applicator license that authorizes a person to purchase and use restricted-use and state-limited-use pesticides for the limited purpose of mosquito control in a county located along the international border with Mexico. The bill requires the TDA, to the extent practicable, to minimize the fees and other requirements to obtain the license. The bill authorizes a person to apply to the TDA for an original or renewal license and requires a person to apply on forms prescribed by the TDA and include a fee in an amount determined by the TDA. The bill requires the TDA to issue a license to an applicant who meets the license requirements provided by TDA rule. The bill authorizes the TDA to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations to implement and administer these provisions of the bill and requires the TDA to coordinate with appropriate federal agencies, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, public and private hospitals, institutions of higher education, and private entities in identifying and soliciting funding to implement and administer such provisions.

S.B. 1312 amends the Health and Safety Code to require the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), to address vector-borne and zoonotic diseases and standardize practices in counties located along the international border with Mexico, to:

- consult with the TDA and other appropriate state agencies to study:
 - the ongoing and potential needs of border counties related to vector-borne and zoonotic diseases;

- the availability of and capacity for vector mitigation and control, including increased staffing, equipment, education, and training; and
- strategies to improve or develop continuing education and public outreach initiatives for vector-borne and zoonotic disease prevention, including sanitation, removal of standing water, use of repellent, and reporting to health authorities of rashes and other symptoms of vector-borne and zoonotic diseases;
- develop rapid local and regional response and support plans for ongoing vector-borne and zoonotic disease control activities and for disasters, including flooding, hurricanes, and outbreaks of vector-borne diseases; and
- perform any administrative actions necessary to address the findings from the study and to implement any appropriate strategies developed under these provisions of the bill.

S.B. 1312 authorizes DSHS to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations to implement and administer these provisions of the bill and requires DSHS to coordinate with appropriate federal agencies, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, public and private hospitals, institutions of higher education, and private entities in implementing and administering such provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.