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By:  Metcalf, Oliverson, et al. H.B. No. 2325

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to providing information and communication regarding and during a disaster.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Subchapter C, Chapter 418, Government Code, is amended by adding Sections 418.054, 418.055, 418.056, 418.057, 418.058, and 418.059 to read as follows:

Sec. 418.054.  COORDINATING 9-1-1 TEXT MESSAGE CAPABILITY. The division, in consultation with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, shall coordinate state and local government efforts to make 9-1-1 emergency service capable of receiving text messages from a cellular telephone or other wireless communication device.

Sec. 418.055.  SOCIAL MEDIA USE DURING AND AFTER DISASTERS. The division, in consultation with any state agency or private entity the division determines is appropriate, shall develop standards for the use of social media as a communication tool by governmental entities during and after a disaster. The standards must:

(1)  require state agencies, political subdivisions, first responders, and volunteers that use social media during and after a disaster to post consistent and clear information;

(2)  optimize the effectiveness of social media use during and after a disaster; and

(3)  require that certain official social media accounts be used during and after a disaster only for providing credible sources of information.

Sec. 418.056.  DISASTER MOBILE APPLICATION. (a) The division shall develop a mobile application for wireless communication devices to communicate critical information during a disaster directly to disaster victims and first responders.

(b)  The mobile application may provide information on:

(1)  road and weather conditions during a disaster; and

(2)  disaster response and recovery activities.

Sec. 418.057.  DISASTER WEB PORTAL. The division shall develop a comprehensive disaster web portal. The web portal must:

(1)  provide disaster information to the public, including information on programs and services available to disaster victims and funding for and expenditures of disaster assistance programs;

(2)  include information on disaster response and recovery activities; and

(3)  provide information on obtaining assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, state agencies, organized volunteer groups, and any other entities providing disaster assistance.

Sec. 418.058.  USE OF DATA ANALYTICS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT. To the extent feasible, the division shall use data analytics software to integrate data from federal, state, local, and nongovernmental sources to more effectively manage disaster response and recovery.

Sec. 418.059.  STUDY ON STANDARD COMMUNICATION FORMAT. (a) To improve the state's response to disasters, the division shall conduct a study on the use of a standard communication format by first responders to create a common interoperable operating framework during a disaster. The study must:

(1)  examine the costs and benefits of promoting the use of a standard communication format to create a comprehensive common operating framework that is interoperable across networks;

(2)  identify any costs that first responders may incur in acquiring equipment complying with a standard communication format; and

(3)  identify necessary actions to adopt a standard communication format.

(b)  Not later than September 1, 2020, the division shall submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, and members of the legislature a report on the findings of the study.

(c)  This section expires December 1, 2020.

SECTION 2.  Subchapter F, Chapter 418, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 418.127 to read as follows:

Sec. 418.127.  DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY OUTREACH. To the extent practicable, the following entities shall conduct community outreach, including public awareness campaigns, and education activities on disaster preparedness each year:

(1)  municipalities and counties;

(2)  the department, including the division;

(3)  the Texas Education Agency;

(4)  the office of the comptroller;

(5)  the Texas Department of Insurance;

(6)  the Texas Department of Transportation;

(7)  the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs;

(8)  the Health and Human Services Commission; and

(9)  the Department of State Health Services.

SECTION 3.  Subchapter H, Chapter 418, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 418.193 to read as follows:

Sec. 418.193.  LOCAL EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE REGISTRY PLANS. (a) In this section, "emergency assistance registry" means the registry maintained by the division that provides local emergency planners and emergency responders with additional information on the needs of certain individuals in their communities.

(b)  An emergency management director described by Section 418.1015 shall develop a plan to use information from the emergency assistance registry during the political subdivision's response to a disaster. The emergency management director shall publish the plan on:

(1)  the political subdivision's Internet website; and

(2)  the department's Internet website in accordance with Subsection (c).

(c)  The division shall develop a process by which a plan developed by an emergency management director under Subsection (b) may be published to the department's Internet website. The division shall establish a designated area on the department's Internet website for the public to view the plan.

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.