By:  Walle H.B. No. 2345

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to resources to facilitate disaster mitigation, response, and recovery.

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

SECTION 1.  Subchapter C, Chapter 16, Water Code, is amended by adding Section 16.061 to read as follows:

Sec. 16.061.  FLOOD MITIGATION AND RESILIENCY. The board shall:

(1)  create an inventory of flood mitigation and resiliency projects;

(2)  develop a method of prioritizing projects described by Subdivision (1); and

(3)  coordinate with the Institute for a Disaster Resilient Texas, created under Section 86.82, Education Code.

SECTION 2.  Subchapter E, Chapter 86, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 86.82 to read as follows:

Sec. 86.82.  INSTITUTE FOR A DISASTER RESILIENT TEXAS. (a) In this section, "institute" means the Institute for a Disaster Resilient Texas.

(b)  The Institute for a Disaster Resilient Texas is a component of Texas A&M University.

(c)  The institute is under the management and direction of the board.

(d)  The institute shall:

(1)  develop data analytics tools to support disaster planning, mitigation, response, and recovery by the state, its political subdivisions, and the public;

(2)  create and maintain web-based analytical and visual tools to communicate disaster risks and ways to reduce those risks, including tools that work on the level of individual parcels of land;

(3)  provide evidence-based information and solutions to aid in the formation of state and local partnerships to support disaster planning, mitigation, response, and recovery;

(4)  collect, display, and communicate comprehensive flood-related information for use by decision-makers and the public;

(5)  discuss, study, and test ideas for flood planning and mitigation; and

(6)  collaborate with other components of The Texas A&M University System, institutions of higher education, as that term is defined by Section 61.003 of this code, state agencies, local governments, and other political subdivisions to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(e)  The institute may employ personnel, including experts in planning, engineering, hydrology, ecology, and economics.

(f)  The institute may accept a gift or grant from any public or private source for the benefit of the institute.

SECTION 3.  STUDY COMMITTEE FOR FLOOD EVENT PARTNERSHIP

(a)  In this Act, "committee" means the Flood Event Partnership Options Special Study Committee.

(b)  The Flood Event Partnership Options Special Study Committee is established and consists of nine persons appointed by the governor to represent the flooding-related interests of the following:

(1)  state agencies;

(2)  federal agencies;

(3)  municipalities;

(4)  conservation and reclamation districts and other special purpose districts with authority over water resources or waterways; and

(5)  nonprofit entities.

(c)  The governor shall appoint persons to serve on the committee not later than October 1, 2019.

(d)  The committee shall conduct a study of the appropriate structure, means of administration, and membership of state-local partnerships to address flooding events in this state.

(e)  The study must address:

(1)  which state and local entities are interested in and capable of participating in effective partnerships to prevent, mitigate, or address flooding events in this state;

(2)  the role that flood planning at the watershed level may play in a state-local partnership's efforts to prevent, mitigate, or address flooding events in this state;

(3)  the possible negative effects efforts in a local area to prevent, mitigate, or address flooding events may have in neighboring areas;

(4)  whether state-local partnerships to prevent, mitigate, or address flooding events in this state may function more effectively on a required basis or voluntary basis and how the organization and structure of the partnerships may differ according to whether it is a required or voluntary relationship;

(5)  what incentives are available or may be made available to encourage effective state-local partnerships to prevent, mitigate, or address flooding events in this state;

(6)  what manner of funding is available or may be made available to foster effective state-local partnerships to prevent, mitigate, or address flooding events in this state;

(7)  appropriate roles for various partners in state-local partnerships to prevent, mitigate, or address flooding events in this state;

(8)  the most effective types of projects a state-local partnership could propose to prevent, mitigate, or address flooding events; and

(9)  which information is best applied by state-local partnerships to prevent, mitigate, or address flooding events and how that information may most effectively be gathered and shared.

(f)  On the request of the committee, The Texas A&M University System shall provide the committee with assistance, necessary support staff, and facilities to conduct meetings.

(g)  The committee shall deliver to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each member of the legislature a report on the determinations of the committee based on the study conducted under this section not later than September 1, 2020. The committee shall deliver to the governor, the lieutenant governor, or a member of the legislature related information on request.

(h)  The committee is abolished, and this section expires May 1, 2021.

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2019.