

By: Metcalf

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, and 418.058 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 the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service and other appropriate public and private entities, 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 certain official social media accounts be

1 used during and after a disaster only for providing credible
2 sources of information.

3 Sec. 418.056. DISASTER MOBILE APPLICATION. (a) The
4 division, in consultation with the Texas A&M Forest Service, shall
5 develop a mobile application for wireless communication devices to
6 communicate critical information during a disaster directly to
7 disaster victims and first responders.

8 (b) The mobile application may provide information on:

- 9 (1) road and weather conditions during a disaster; and
10 (2) disaster response and recovery activities.

11 Sec. 418.057. USE OF DATA ANALYTICS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT.
12 To the extent feasible, the division shall use data analytics
13 software to integrate data from federal, state, local, and
14 nongovernmental sources to more effectively manage disaster
15 response and recovery.

16 Sec. 418.058. STUDY ON STANDARD COMMUNICATION FORMAT. (a)
17 To improve the state's response to disasters, the division, in
18 consultation with the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service,
19 shall conduct a study on the use of a standard communication format
20 by first responders to create a common operating framework during a
21 disaster. The study must:

22 (1) examine the costs and benefits of promoting the
23 use of a standard communication format to create a single
24 comprehensive common operating framework;

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

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

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

6 (c) This section expires December 1, 2020.

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

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

13 (1) municipalities and counties;

14 (2) the division;

15 (3) the Texas Education Agency;

16 (4) the office of the comptroller;

17 (5) the Texas Department of Insurance;

18 (6) the Texas Department of Transportation;

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

21 (8) the Department of State Health Services.

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

24 Sec. 418.193. DISASTER WEB PORTAL. The Texas A&M
25 University System, in coordination with the governor and the
26 division, shall develop a comprehensive disaster web portal. The
27 web portal must:

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

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

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

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