

By: Dominguez, Murphy, Calanni, Bucy, et al.

H.B. No. 2340

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to emergency and disaster management, response, and
3 recovery.

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

5 SECTION 1. Section 418.002, Government Code, is amended to
6 read as follows:

7 Sec. 418.002. PURPOSES. The purposes of this chapter are
8 to:

9 (1) reduce vulnerability of people and communities of
10 this state to damage, injury, and loss of life and property
11 resulting from natural or man-made catastrophes, riots, or hostile
12 military or paramilitary action;

13 (2) prepare for prompt and efficient rescue, care, and
14 treatment of persons victimized or threatened by disaster;

15 (3) provide a setting conducive to the rapid and
16 orderly restoration and rehabilitation of persons and property
17 affected by disasters;

18 (4) clarify and strengthen the roles of the governor,
19 state agencies, the judicial branch of state government, and local
20 governments in prevention of, preparation for, response to, and
21 recovery from disasters;

22 (5) authorize and provide for cooperation in disaster
23 mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery;

24 (6) authorize and provide for coordination of

1 activities relating to disaster mitigation, preparedness,
2 response, and recovery by agencies and officers of this state, and
3 similar state-local, interstate, federal-state, and foreign
4 activities in which the state and its political subdivisions may
5 participate;

6 (7) provide an emergency management system embodying
7 all aspects of predisaster preparedness and postdisaster response;

8 (8) assist in mitigation of disasters caused or
9 aggravated by inadequate planning for and regulation of public and
10 private facilities and land use; ~~and~~

11 (9) encourage state agencies, local governments,
12 nongovernmental organizations, private entities, and individuals
13 to adopt the goals of the strategic plan of the Federal Emergency
14 Management Agency for preparing for, responding to, and recovering
15 from a disaster that emphasize cooperation among federal agencies,
16 state agencies, local governments, nongovernmental organizations,
17 private entities, and individuals in each activity or project
18 undertaken to ensure that this state is prepared to effectively
19 respond to and recover from a disaster; and

20 (10) provide the authority and mechanism to respond to
21 an energy emergency.

22 SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 418, Government Code, is
23 amended by adding Sections 418.054 and 418.055 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 418.054. UNMANNED AIRCRAFT STUDY GROUP. (a) In this
25 section, "study group" means the unmanned aircraft study group
26 established under this section.

27 (b) The unmanned aircraft study group is established and

1 consists of the following members appointed by the chief of the
2 division:

- 3 (1) representatives of the division;
4 (2) representatives from institutions of higher
5 education; and
6 (3) other appropriate interested persons.

7 (c) The study group shall study issues related to the
8 appropriate use of unmanned aircraft in responding to and
9 recovering from a disaster, including:

10 (1) strategies for coordinating and promoting the use
11 of unmanned aircraft among state agencies, local governments, and
12 private entities in the response and recovery; and

13 (2) recommended changes to state law that would allow
14 state agencies, local governments, and private entities to more
15 effectively use unmanned aircraft in the response and recovery.

16 (d) Not later than November 1, 2020, the study group shall
17 submit a report containing recommendations on the issues described
18 by Subsection (c) to each member of the legislature.

19 (e) The study group is abolished and this section expires
20 January 1, 2021.

21 Sec. 418.055. INFORMATION SHARING WORK GROUP. (a) In this
22 section, "work group" means the work group established under this
23 section.

24 (b) The division shall establish a work group of state
25 agencies involved in disaster management. The work group consists
26 of members appointed by the chief of the division who represent:

- 27 (1) the comptroller's office;

- 1 (2) the Department of State Health Services;
2 (3) the Texas Department of Transportation;
3 (4) the General Land Office;
4 (5) the Health and Human Services Commission;
5 (6) institutions of higher education; and
6 (7) to the extent practicable, appropriate federal
7 agencies.

8 (c) The work group shall develop recommendations for
9 improving the manner in which electronic information is stored by
10 and shared among state agencies and between state agencies and
11 federal agencies to improve the capacity of the agencies to:

- 12 (1) respond to a disaster; and
13 (2) coordinate the agencies' responses to a disaster.

14 (d) Not later than November 1 of each even-numbered year,
15 the work group shall submit the group's recommendations to the
16 governor.

17 SECTION 3. Subchapter C, Chapter 418, Government Code, is
18 amended by adding Section 418.056 to read as follows:

19 Sec. 418.056. PERMITTING TASK FORCE. (a) The division
20 shall form a task force with representatives from the General Land
21 Office, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Parks and
22 Wildlife Department, Texas Water Development Board, Texas A&M
23 AgriLife Extension Service, Department of State Health Services,
24 Public Utility Commission of Texas, and Texas Historical Commission
25 to be activated if a state of disaster is declared under Section
26 418.014 because of weather conditions to expedite:

- 27 (1) environmental permitting; and

1 (2) access to funds from federal disaster relief
2 programs following the disaster.

3 (b) The task force formed under this section shall develop
4 recommendations for expediting the evaluation of environmental
5 permits during disaster recovery in order for local entities to
6 demonstrate compliance with regulations and access federal
7 disaster relief programs and funding.

8 (c) In performing its duties under this section, the task
9 force may use resources of agencies participating in the task
10 force.

11 SECTION 4. Subchapter A, Chapter 751, Government Code, is
12 amended by adding Section 751.017 to read as follows:

13 Sec. 751.017. FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY
14 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING DISASTER ASSISTANCE. (a) The office, in
15 consultation with the Texas Division of Emergency Management, and,
16 as practicable, federal agencies and members of Congress, shall:

17 (1) study federal laws and policies related to issues
18 affecting the ability of federal agencies, state agencies, and
19 local governments to cooperate in responding to a disaster,
20 including issues related to procurement, housing assistance,
21 information sharing, personnel, and federal disaster assistance
22 programs; and

23 (2) make recommendations to improve federal laws and
24 policies related to the issues described by Subdivision (1).

25 (b) Not later than November 1, 2020, the office shall
26 deliver to the board a report of the recommendations described by
27 Subsection (a)(2).

1 (c) This section expires January 1, 2021.

2 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.