

AN ACT

relating to emergency and disaster management, response, and recovery.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(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.

H.B. No. 2340

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 2340 was passed by the House on April 11, 2019, by the following vote: Yeas 145, Nays 1, 2 present, not voting.

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Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 2340 was passed by the Senate on May 16, 2019, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

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Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

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Governor