

By: Lozano

H.B. No. 4046

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, and 418.056 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. DISASTER MOBILE APPLICATION. (a) The

division, in consultation with the Texas A&M Forest Service, 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. 418.056. STUDY ON IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS DURING

DISASTERS. (a) The division, in consultation with the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and other appropriate entities, shall conduct a study on

1 improving communication during a disaster. The study must:

2 (1) consider ways to improve and standardize the use  
3 of social media as a communication tool during and after a disaster;

4 (2) examine the costs and benefits of promoting the  
5 use of a standard communication format to create a single  
6 comprehensive common operating framework;

7 (3) identify any costs that first responders may incur  
8 in acquiring equipment complying with a standard communication  
9 format;

10 (4) examine how private utility providers and the use  
11 of the providers' portable satellite communications equipment and  
12 portable mobile telephone towers may assist in response and  
13 recovery after disasters; and

14 (5) examine how the state may use data analytics for  
15 more effective and timely analysis of information to improve  
16 disaster management.

17 (b) Not later than August 31, 2020, the division shall  
18 submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, and members of the  
19 legislature a report on the findings of the study.

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

21 SECTION 2. Subchapter H, Chapter 418, Government Code, is  
22 amended by adding Section 418.193 to read as follows:

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

27 (1) provide disaster information to the public,

1 including information on programs and services available to  
2 disaster victims and funding for and expenditures of disaster  
3 assistance programs;

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

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

10 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.