

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2957
By: Geren
Energy Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) may use unmanned aircraft to capture images at the scene of a spill of hazardous materials, in connection with oil pipeline safety and rig protection, and for the purposes of fire suppression. However, concerns have been raised regarding the lack of any explicit authority for RRC pipeline and surface inspectors to use unmanned aircraft for inspection purposes. H.B. 2957 seeks to address this issue by authorizing the RRC to use unmanned aircraft for purposes of inspecting oil and gas, pipeline, and surface mining infrastructure and facilities.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 2957 amends the Government Code to authorize the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) or an RRC agent, servant, or employee to capture an image using an unmanned aircraft in Texas if the image is captured in connection with the inspection and examination of the following:

- an oil or gas site or facility, including a well, tank, or disposal or injection site;
- a pipeline facility; or
- a surface mining site.

H.B. 2957 amends the Natural Resources Code to specify that the requirement that the RRC have access at all times to the oil property of all persons for inspection and examination includes inspection and examination by unmanned aircraft.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.