By: Tinderholt H.B. No. 1731

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to protection of the electric power transmission and distribution system.

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

SECTION 1. ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD LEVELS. Section 39.151, Utilities Code, is amended by adding Subsections (o) and (p) to read as follows:

(o) The commission by rule shall identify and implement design standards for the electric power transmission and distribution system to limit electromagnetic field levels and protect the transmission and distribution system.

(p) The commission by rule shall require the independent organization certified under this section to consider electromagnetic field levels when determining the public need for a transmission line.

SECTION 2. ELECTRICAL POWER GRID RELIABILITY TASK FORCE. (a) The electrical power grid reliability task force is created. The task force shall study the likely effectiveness and costs of various measures to protect and strengthen the electric power transmission and distribution system against all hazards.

(b) The task force consists of five members appointed by the lieutenant governor and five members appointed by the speaker of the house. The task force:

(1) may not:

(A) consist of more than 10 members; or

(B) include employees of the Public Utility Commission of Texas; and

(2) must include at least the following members:

(A) two members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house;

(B) two senators appointed by the lieutenant governor;

(C) an expert on electromagnetic pulse disturbances appointed by the lieutenant governor;

(D) an expert on cybersecurity appointed by the lieutenant governor;

(E) an expert on terrorism appointed by the lieutenant governor;

(F) an expert on geomagnetic disturbances appointed by the speaker of the house; and

(G) an expert on electric power transmission and distribution system security appointed by the speaker of the house.

(c) The task force shall elect a presiding officer.

(d) The task force shall:

(1) evaluate strategies and technologies to strengthen the transmission and distribution system, including:

(A) blocking devices;

(B) faraday cages; and

(C) surge arrestors;

(2) survey transmission and distribution utilities to:

(A) determine the number of high voltage transformers in this state; and

(B) evaluate the utilities' plans to improve current infrastructure;

(3) research existing grid protection policies outside this state;

(4) make recommendations for the implementation of strategies and technologies that will most effectively and efficiently strengthen the transmission and distribution system, including:

(A) blocking devices;

(B) faraday cages; and

(C) surge arrestors;

(5) make recommendations regarding the allocation of costs of implementation, including recommendations for which costs, if any, should be the responsibility of shareholders or ratepayers; and

(6) determine the feasibility of implementing the recommended actions.

(e) Not later than September 1, 2022, the task force shall prepare and submit to the governor and the legislature a report of the task force's findings and recommendations.

(f) A member of the task force established under this section is not entitled to compensation. Members may be reimbursed for expenses as follows:

(1) a member is entitled to reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses as provided in the General

Appropriations Act; and

(2) a member appointed as a representative of a state agency is eligible for reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses according to the applicable agency's policies.

(g) The division of emergency management of the office of the governor shall provide administrative support and staff to the advisory task force established under this section.

SECTION 3. EXPIRATION. The task force established under this Act is abolished and this Act expires September 1, 2023.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.