

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1315  
By: Herrero  
Defense & Veterans' Affairs  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The Burn Pits 360 Veterans Organization has worked diligently for years to ensure service members and veterans exposed to toxins from open-air burn pits during their service gain access to medical care and resources. The organization was integral to the passage of legislation during the 86th Legislative Session that provided for the creation of the Texas Open Burn Pit Registry to help service members, veterans, and medical providers determine the long-term effects of exposure to airborne hazards. H.B. 1315 seeks to ensure the registry's benefits are fully realized and to honor this highly effective organization by establishing the open burn pit registry fund composed in part of revenue from the issuance of specialty license plates that honor U.S. armed forces members who were exposed to open burn pits during their military service.

### **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. 1315 amends the Health and Safety Code to establish the open burn pit registry fund as a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund that is composed of the following sources:

- money transferred to the fund at the direction of the legislature;
- gifts and grants contributed to the fund;
- the earnings of the fund; and
- money deposited to the credit of the fund from the issuance of specialty license plates under the bill's provisions.

Money in the fund may be appropriated only to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and used only for purposes of the open burn pit registry established under state law, except that DSHS may use the money for any other DSHS purpose consistent with legislative appropriation if DSHS finds that the registry is adequately funded and contributions to the fund exceed the amount necessary for the registry to be adequately funded.

H.B. 1315 amends the Transportation Code to require the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) to issue specialty license plates to honor members of the U.S. armed forces who were exposed to open burn pits during their military service. The license plates must include the words "Burn Pits 360 Veterans Organization" and a depiction of the Burn Pits 360 nonprofit

organization logo. The bill requires the remainder of the fee for issuance of the license plates, after deduction of TxDMV administrative costs, to be deposited to the credit of the open burn pit registry fund established under the bill's provisions. The bill exempts these license plates from statutory provisions that condition the manufacture of a specialty license plate authorized after January 1, 1999, on a party filing a request with TxDMV, accompanied by a deposit of \$8,000, before the fifth anniversary of the effective date of the law authorizing issuance.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.