

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 4047
By: Guillen
Energy Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The United States is highly reliant on uranium imports to supply its 92 nuclear power reactors, including the four reactors located in Texas. Most uranium used domestically is purchased from countries like Canada, Kazakhstan, and Australia, which is currently cheaper than mining domestically. However, importing uranium leaves the nuclear power industry vulnerable to global supply chain shocks and reliance on Russia, which is another major importer to the United States. It has been questioned whether Texas could help reduce national reliance on imported uranium. Uranium mining in South Texas is ongoing but the area still has untapped uranium deposits. If these deposits were comprehensively studied, subsidized, and exploited, they could help the nation become more energy independent and help boost the state's economy. H.B. 4047 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to conduct a study on the uranium deposits in Texas and how utilizing those deposits could lessen the United States' reliance on foreign sources of uranium.

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. 4047 requires the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to conduct a study on the uranium deposits in Texas and how utilizing those deposits could lessen the United States' reliance on foreign sources of uranium. The bill requires the TCEQ, not later than December 1, 2024, to submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives a report that includes the study's findings and any recommendations for legislative or other action. The report must include recommendations for legislative or regulatory changes and potential economic incentive programs to support the uranium mining industry in Texas. The bill's provisions expire January 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.