

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1404
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Business & Commerce
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Nuclear power is a reliable and safe source of energy that has the potential to meet Texas' growing energy demands. As more coal plants begin to retire, it is important to explore alternative uses for existing infrastructure that can provide affordable and sustainable power. Therefore, this proposal aims to outline the need for a work group that will study the benefits of coal-to-nuclear facility conversion in Texas.

S.B. 1404 seeks to establish a work group to study the benefits of coal-to-nuclear facility conversion and provide recommendations to the Texas Legislature on the feasibility and advantages of such a conversion.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 1404 amends current law relating to the creation of a work group to study the benefits of coal-to-nuclear electric generating facility conversion.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. DEFINITION. Defines "work group."

SECTION 2. WORK GROUP FORMATION AND ADMINISTRATION. (a) Provides that the coal-to-nuclear conversion work group (work group) is established and composed of 16 members with:

- (1) one member of the senate appointed by the lieutenant governor;
- (2) one member of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;
- (3) two members representing institutions of higher education appointed by the governor;
- (4) one ex officio member representing the Public Utility Commission of Texas appointed by the governor;
- (5) one ex officio member representing the independent organization certified under Section 39.151 (Essential Organizations), Utilities Code, for the ERCOT power region appointed by the governor; and
- (6) 10 members of the public who have knowledge and experience in nuclear engineering, nuclear safety, energy policy, or economic analysis, and who are appointed as follows:

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

(B) five members appointed by the lieutenant governor.

(b) Provides that the work group members described by Subsections (a)(1) and (2) of this section serve as co-chairs of the work group.

(c) Requires the work group to meet at the call of its co-chairs.

(d) Authorizes the work group to form committees for the efficient operation of the work group, at the discretion of the co-chairs of the work group. Requires the co-chairs of the work group to appoint the presiding officer of each committee. Authorizes the presiding officer of a committee to invite other members of the work group to serve on the committee. Authorizes a committee to consult with subject matter experts.

(e) Authorizes the work group to adopt rules, procedures, and policies as necessary or convenient to administer this Act and fulfill the responsibilities of the work group.

(f) Provides that a member of the work group is prohibited from receiving compensation for serving on the work group but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred by the member in the performance of official duties as a member of the work group as provided by the General Appropriations Act.

(g) Requires the senate and the house of representatives to provide administrative support to the work group as necessary to implement this Act.

SECTION 3. WORK GROUP DUTIES. (a) Requires the work group to:

(1) study the benefits of converting sites in this state with coal-fired electric generating facilities to use nuclear electric generating facilities instead; and

(2) develop a model plan for implementing coal-to-nuclear conversion to provide affordable and sustainable power in this state.

(b) Requires the work group, in developing the model plan, to:

(1) conduct a comprehensive review of research and information on coal-to-nuclear conversion and related issues;

(2) engage in stakeholder outreach to gather feedback and input from the public, industry, state agencies, and relevant organizations;

(3) identify the potential benefits of coal-to-nuclear conversion, including cost-effectiveness, energy security, and reduced environmental impact;

(4) assess the economic viability of coal-to-nuclear conversion and provide recommendations on financing and cost-effectiveness; and

(5) consider the regulatory framework and requirements for coal-to-nuclear conversion and provide recommendations for streamlining the conversion process.

(c) Requires the work group, not later than October 31, 2024, to submit to each standing committee of the senate and house of representatives with oversight jurisdiction over environmental concerns or electric utilities a report that includes the model plan developed under this section and any findings or recommendations made by a committee formed under Section 2(d) of this Act.

SECTION 4. APPOINTMENTS. Requires the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives, as soon as practicable, but not later than October 1, 2023, to appoint the members of the work group.

SECTION 5. INITIAL MEETING. Requires the work group, not later than November 1, 2023, to hold its initial meeting at the call of the co-chairs of the work group.

SECTION 6. EXPIRATION. Provides that this Act expires and the work group is abolished June 30, 2025.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE. Effective date: September 1, 2023.