

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1404  
By: Parker  
State Affairs  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Nuclear power is a reliable and safe source of energy with the potential to meet the state's growing energy demands. The state would benefit from further study of the potential benefits of converting sites with coal-fired electric generating facilities to nuclear generating facilities instead and would also benefit from the development of a model plan for implementation of this conversion. Accordingly, S.B. 1404 seeks to establish a work group to study the benefits of coal-to-nuclear facility conversion and provide recommendations to the legislature on the feasibility and advantages of such a conversion.

### **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**

S.B. 1404 creates the coal-to-nuclear conversion work group to study the benefits of converting sites in Texas with coal-fired electric generating facilities to use nuclear electric generating facilities instead and to develop a model plan for implementing coal-to-nuclear conversion to provide affordable and sustainable power in Texas. The work group is composed of the following 16 members:

- one member of the senate appointed by the lieutenant governor;
- one member of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;
- two members representing institutions of higher education appointed by the governor;
- one ex officio member representing the Public Utility Commission of Texas appointed by the governor;
- one ex officio member representing ERCOT appointed by the governor; and
- 10 members of the public who have knowledge and experience in nuclear engineering, nuclear safety, energy policy, or economic analysis, with five members each appointed by the speaker and the lieutenant governor.

The bill requires the appointments to be made as soon as practicable, but not later than October 1, 2023.

S.B. 1404 provides the following with respect to the administration and operation of the work group:

- the governor must designate the members of the work group appointed from the legislature to serve as chair and vice chair of the work group;

- the work group must meet at the call of its chair and the work group must hold its initial meeting not later than November 1, 2023;
- the work group may form committees for the efficient operation of the work group, at the discretion of the chair of the work group, and a committee may consult with subject matter experts;
- the chair of the work group must appoint the presiding officer of each committee and the presiding officer of a committee may invite other members of the work group to serve on the committee;
- the work group may adopt rules, procedures, and policies as necessary or convenient to administer the bill's provisions and fulfill its responsibilities;
- a member of the work group may not receive 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; and
- the senate and the house of representatives must provide administrative support to the work group as necessary to implement the bill's provisions.

S.B. 1404 requires the work group to take the following actions in developing the model plan:

- conduct a comprehensive review of research and information on coal-to-nuclear conversion and related issues;
- engage in stakeholder outreach to gather feedback and input from the public, industry, state agencies, and relevant organizations;
- identify the potential benefits of coal-to-nuclear conversion, including cost-effectiveness, energy security, and reduced environmental impact;
- assess the economic viability of coal-to-nuclear conversion and provide recommendations on financing and cost-effectiveness; and
- consider the regulatory framework and requirements for coal-to-nuclear conversion and provide recommendations for streamlining the conversion process.

Not later than October 31, 2024, the work group must 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 and any findings or recommendations made by a committee formed by the work group.

The bill's provisions expire and the work group is abolished June 30, 2025.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.