

By: Lopez of Cameron

H.B. No. 68

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a study by the Texas Water Development Board on the costs of developing flood infrastructure in this state.

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

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS. In this Act:

(1) "Artificial drainage system" means a man-made system used to remove floodwater in a community that lacks topographic relief, slope, or naturally defined floodways.

(2) "Board" means the Texas Water Development Board.

(3) "High-cost drainage zone" means an area where the construction, maintenance, or improvement of flood infrastructure requires significant financial investment due to natural, regulatory, or logistical factors.

SECTION 2. STUDY. The board, in coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the General Land Office, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and regional flood planning groups, drainage districts, and local governments, shall conduct a study on the costs of developing flood infrastructure in this state. The study must:

(1) identify and map high-cost drainage zones across this state;

(2) analyze flood infrastructure cost drivers that affect the development and maintenance of flood infrastructure by

contributing to the cost of planning, constructing, or maintaining flood mitigation systems, including:

- (A) right-of-way acquisition;
- (B) soil conditions and topographic limitations;
- (C) regulatory compliance and permitting;
- (D) material and labor costs; and
- (E) long-term maintenance and sediment control;

(3) analyze historical flood infrastructure project costs and compare variations across regions in this state;

(4) based on the data gathered under Subdivision (3) of this section, develop a flood infrastructure cost heat map that visually represents the cost variation in developing flood infrastructure across the state;

(5) include cost estimates and evaluate the return on investment for various flood mitigation strategies, including:

- (A) expanding artificial drainage systems;
- (B) restoring natural drainage features;
- (C) implementing regional flood water detention facilities;

(D) enhancing flood water conveyance infrastructure; and

(E) improving the regulatory framework for floodplain management;

(6) establish projections for future flood mitigation costs, urbanization, and regulatory updates by incorporating precipitation frequency estimates from the 14th and 15th volumes of the Precipitation-Frequency Atlas of the United States published by

1 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

2 (7) provide recommendations for cost-effective flood
3 mitigation strategies and potential funding mechanisms to support
4 communities located in high-cost drainage zones.

5 SECTION 3. REPORT. Not later than December 1, 2026, the
6 board shall:

7 (1) prepare and submit to the legislature a written
8 report of the findings of the study and the recommendations
9 required under Section 2 of this Act; and

10 (2) make the report required by Subdivision (1) of
11 this section publicly available by publishing the report on the
12 board's Internet website.

13 SECTION 4. EXPIRATION. This Act expires April 1, 2027.

14 SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect on the
15 91st day after the last day of the legislative session.