

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD**  
**Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 89TH LEGISLATURE 2nd CALLED SESSION 2025**

**August 18, 2025**

**TO:** Honorable Ken King, Chair, House Committee on Disaster Preparedness & Flooding, Select

**FROM:** Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE: HB2** by King (Relating to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, including required training for justices of the peace and responding to mass fatality events; requiring a license; authorizing fees.),  
**As Introduced**

The fiscal implications of the bill cannot be determined due to costs related to establishing a new mass fatality data management system and the amount of any offsetting revenue in the form of license fees, criminal history check fees, and gifts, grants, and donations being unknown.

Among other provisions, the bill would require the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) to administer and enforce an emergency manager licensing program, for which the agency could adopt fees to cover administrative costs, and would require the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to establish and maintain a statewide volunteer registration and management database to register, credential, and manage individuals who volunteer to assist in disaster response or recovery operations for a state agency or local government. The bill would authorize TDEM to seek and accept gifts, grants, and donations to implement the database. The bill would also authorize TCFP and TDEM to conduct a criminal history check on each emergency management license applicant and each registering volunteer, respectively, and would authorize TCFP to require that each license applicant pay a fee to cover any costs associated with the check.

The bill would expand the applicability of required emergency management training. The bill would require the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), in collaboration with TDEM, to develop a training program for justices of the peace on managing mass fatality events and to establish a mass fatality operations rapid response team that would be integrated with search and rescue or recovery operations and family assistance centers.

TDEM indicates the need for \$808,333 in fiscal year 2026 and \$191,667 in fiscal year 2027 to cover operating expenses related to operating the statewide volunteer registration and management database, establishing additional training for justices of the peace, and setting up a framework for the training and instruction of emergency managers. The agency's estimate does not include out-year costs for conducting criminal history checks.

DSHS indicates the need for a 1.0 full-time-equivalent (FTE) Emergency Management Program Coordinator III position for the development of the communications plan for state agencies and local governments. DSHS would coordinate with TDEM and other partners. Salaries, benefits, and related costs for the new FTE are estimated to total \$130,718 in fiscal year 2026 and \$165,468 in fiscal year 2027. The lower cost in the first fiscal year is attributable to a later assumed start date for the new position in the year.

DSHS assumes some duties can be completed within existing resources. DSHS will coordinate with TDEM to develop a training program for justices of the peace. In addition, DSHS already has a mass fatality operations rapid response team, the Texas Mass Fatality Operations Response Team (TMORT), that is part of the Emergency Medical Task Force (EMTF). The team coordinates and has relationships with TDEM and regional advisory councils. TMORT is partially funded with federal funding. DSHS is responsible for activating and deploying the TMORT team for incidents. It is assumed that DSHS can continue to support this function, to facilitate immediate, early, and appropriate activation of mass fatality management resources and to ensure integration of the mass fatality operations response team with search and rescue or recovery operations.

It is assumed that DSHS would deploy and assist the TMORT team to coordinate with law enforcement agencies, fire departments, emergency medical services providers, search and rescue organizations, and others to meet the bill's requirement for integration of mass fatality operations with search and rescue or recovery operations. DSHS assumes that any costs to deploy these resources in an emergency event would be covered with response-specific funding. DSHS would expect federal reimbursement should there be a federal emergency declaration.

DSHS currently uses a system, Pulsara, that is capable of doing the first three requirements of the mass fatality data management system described in the bill: assigning a unique case number and incident tagging, tracking the chain-of-custody for a body and associated personal effects, and storing documentation of an autopsy and identification and release of a body. For the third requirement, medical examiners (MEs) do not currently have access to Pulsara, but DSHS could grant it, and MEs could load and store their reports in Pulsara. These can be done within the current cost of Pulsara. However, Pulsara cannot provide real-time status updates and notifications for close relatives of a victim of a mass fatality. Therefore, it is assumed that DSHS would have to develop a new system to meet all of the bill's requirements for the mass fatality data management system. DSHS is unable to estimate the cost of the new system.

The Comptroller indicates that the number of applicants for emergency manager licenses and the fees that TCFP would charge are unknown; therefore, the revenue impact to the state cannot be estimated. The amount and timing of any gifts, grants, and donations that would be received are also unknown and cannot be estimated.

It is assumed that costs associated with the bill to TCFP and the Department of Public Safety could be absorbed using existing resources.

### **Local Government Impact**

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

**Source Agencies:** 300 Trusteed Programs Within the Office of the Governor, 304 Comptroller of Public Accounts, 405 Department of Public Safety, 411 Commission on Fire Protection, 537 State Health Services, Department of, 575 Texas Division of Emergency Management, 710 Texas A&M University System Administrative and General Offices

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