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| BILL ANALYSIS |

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| S.B. 767 |
| By: Sparks |
| Agriculture & Livestock |
| Committee Report (Unamended) |

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| **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**  In 2024, wildfires in the Texas Panhandle, the largest in state history, burned over a million acres of land. Due to the Panhandle's rural nature, many jurisdictions in the region can rely heavily on volunteer fire departments (VFD). However, the bill sponsor has informed the committee that there is a current lack of coordination between the state government and VFDs, which can lead to both slow wildfire responses and a lack of equipment for VFDs to effectively fight wildfires. Additionally, there is currently no outward facing statewide system in place to track the real-time status and location of fire departments' firefighting equipment. In the Texas House of Representatives Investigative Committee on the Panhandle Wildfires 2024 report to the house, the committee recommended that the Texas A&M Forest Service consider options to enhance its current firefighting equipment tracking. S.B. 767 seeks to remedy these issues and satisfy the committee's recommendation by requiring the Texas A&M Forest Service to create and maintain a statewide firefighting equipment database. |
| **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. 767 amends the Government Code to require the Texas A&M Forest Service to create and maintain a comprehensive database that shows in real time the statewide inventory of firefighting equipment that is available for use in responding to wildfires. The bill requires the database to include the following information:   * a description of the type of firefighting equipment each fire department in Texas has available for use in responding to wildfires; and * contact information for the fire department that has the equipment.   The database must be searchable by location and equipment type, be accessible by all fire departments in Texas, and allow each fire department to update the information in the database regarding the equipment the department has available. The bill requires the forest service to do the following:   * assist fire departments who choose to provide equipment information in updating the database annually or as soon as practicable after any change in the availability of the department's firefighting equipment; and * use an electronic notification system to remind applicable fire departments, at least once each calendar year, to update their equipment availability.   For these purposes, the term "fire department" includes a volunteer fire department or an emergency services district. |
| **EFFECTIVE DATE**  September 1, 2025. |