**BILL ANALYSIS**

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| Senate Research Center | S.B. 1320 |
|  | By: Sparks |
|  | Criminal Justice |
|  | 3/28/2025 |
|  | As Filed |

**AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

This legislation establishes a specialized Organized Oilfield Theft Prevention Unit within the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to combat the growing problem of organized oilfield theft, which costs the industry millions annually and threatens the state's energy economy. Cartels and other criminal groups target oil and gas equipment and petroleum products through organized theft rings that are challenging to investigate and prosecute. The unit will investigate and arrest individuals engaged in offenses under Penal Code Sections 31.19 (Theft of Petroleum Products) and 31.03 (General Theft) related to oil and gas equipment, collaborating with federal, state, and local law enforcement, district attorneys, the Railroad Commission of Texas, and industry stakeholders. Headquartered in DPS Region 4 (Permian Basin) with statewide authority as needed, the unit aims to protect oilfield assets, strengthen the energy industry, prevent economic losses, and dismantle criminal enterprises. DPS will provide specialized training for law enforcement on investigating oilfield theft, maintain a centralized database to monitor incidents and trends, and submit a biennial report to state leadership detailing the unit's activities, arrest and prosecution statistics, recovered assets, and legislative and administrative recommendations.

As proposed, S.B. 1320 amends current law relating to the establishment of the Organized Oilfield Theft Prevention Unit within the Texas Department of Public Safety.

**RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the director of public safety in SECTION 1 (Section 411.61, Government Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Railroad Commission of Texas in SECTION 2 of this bill.

**SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 411, Government Code, by adding Subchapter AA, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER AA: ORGANIZED OILFIELD THEFT PREVENTION UNIT

Sec. 411.6. DEFINITIONS. Defines "unit," "oil and gas equipment," "petroleum product," and "organized oilfield theft."

Sec. 411.61. ORGANIZED OILFIELD THEFT PREVENTION UNIT. (a) Requires the public safety director (director) to create an organized oilfield theft prevention unit (unit) to be operated by the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS).

(b) Requires the unit to investigate and arrest individuals determined to have committed an offense under Section 31.19 (Theft of Petroleum Product), Penal Code, or Section 31.03 (Theft), Penal Code, when the unlawfully appropriated property contains oil and gas equipment.

(c) Requires the unit to coordinate with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, district attorneys, the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC), and any persons or entities who are the victim of an offense described by Subsection (b) for the purposes of fulfilling the unit's duties under this subchapter.

(d) Requires the director to designate a command structure within DPS to oversee the operations of the unit and ensure collaboration with all entities, as described by Subsection (c).

(e) Requires the director to adopt rules, subject to RRC approval, considered necessary for the control and general administration of the unit, including rules governing the procurement of facilities and equipment for the unit and the training and working conditions for unit personnel.

Sec. 411.62. PRIMARY JURISDICTION. Requires the unit to be headquartered and primarily operate in Region 4 of DPS's designated regions.

(b) Requires that nothing in this section be construed to prevent the unit from carrying out the duties prescribed under this Subchapter in the boundaries of another DPS designated region.

Sec. 411.63. ADDITIONAL DUTIES. (a) Requires the unit, in addition to the duties described under Section 411.61(b) and (c), in conjunction with DPS, to develop and deploy specialized training, resources, policing strategies tailored to investigating and preventing organized oilfield theft to local law enforcement, conduct public outreach and awareness initiatives to educate industry professionals and communities on organized oilfield theft prevention, and maintain a centralized database for tracking organized oilfield theft incidents and related criminal enterprises.

Sec. 411.64. BIENNIAL REPORT. (a) Requires DPS, no later than January 1 of each odd numbered year, to submit a biennial report to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house, and all relevant legislative committees detailing the unit's activities and effectiveness, including statistics on the unit's arrests, prosecutions, and recovered assets, and legislative or administrative recommendations to improve the efficacy of the unit.

SECTION 2. Requires RRC, not later than December 1, 2025, to adopt all rules necessary to implement and administer this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.