

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R9 KBT-D

H.B. 1592
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Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Agricultural pests and plant diseases pose a significant concern to Texans, businesses, and the agricultural industry. Several examples of these diseases include southern pine bark beetles, emerald ash borers, and citrus greening. These diseases have negatively impacted both the Texas and U.S. economies. According to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, citrus greening alone threatens the \$200 million dollar citrus industry. Additionally, the Texas Department of Agriculture estimates that there has been a \$1.4 billion economic loss due to invasive pests. Therefore, early detections and notifications are necessary to protect growers, retailers, nurseries, and citizens.

H.B. 1592 aims to create a voluntary, opt-in public alert system through the AgriLife Extension Service. This system will coordinate with the Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Texas Animal Health Commission to warn interested parties of wildlife and plant pests, diseases, and quarantines. H.B. 1592 includes enhancing early detection, rapid response, improving coordination, and public awareness. The measures support farmers, businesses, and citizens. Overall, H.B. 1592 is a proactive measure that better informs Texans to protect themselves from pests and diseases of regulatory concern. Through this bill, there will be agricultural resilience, transparency, and timely information shared amongst all interested stakeholders negatively impacted by threats to plants and natural ecosystems.

H.B. 1592 amends current law relating to an alert system for dangerous plant and wildlife pests and diseases administered by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter K, Chapter 88, Education Code, by adding Section 88.823, as follows:

Sec. 88.823. PEST, DISEASE, AND QUARANTINE ALERT SYSTEM. (a) Requires the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (extension service), with the cooperation of the Department of Agriculture (TDA), the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), and the Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), to develop and implement a statewide Internet-based alert system for notifications related to wildlife and plant pests, diseases, and quarantines. Requires that the alert system issue notifications for a confirmed case of a dangerous plant or wildlife pest or disease, the establishment, modification, or removal of a pest or disease quarantine order, and any compliance agreements entered into with TDA related to a pest or disease quarantine.

(b) Requires that the alert system established under this section issue notifications through e-mail and provide for enrollment in the alert system for delivery of a system notification.

(c) Requires the extension service to enter into a memorandum of understanding with TDA, TAHC, and TPWD to ensure the extension service is able to issue a required notification under Subsection (a) within 72 hours of an applicable action by those agencies.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.