

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2230
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Intergovernmental Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law allows the Cameron County Commissioners Court to temporarily close beaches or restrict access during space flight launches to protect public safety. Any closures must comply with local beach access and dune protection plans, with the General Land Office having the authority to approve or deny requests, establish agreements with the county, and adopt rules governing beach closures. S.B. 2230 seeks to further address safety around space flight launch sites by providing for the compelled evacuation of any unauthorized person from a hazard area, as calculated by the Federal Aviation Administration, and by establishing a criminal penalty for violating such an evacuation order.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill expressly does one or more of the following: creates a criminal offense, increases the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or changes 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. 2230 amends the Natural Resources Code to set out the following provisions for the purposes of protecting the public health, safety, and welfare with respect to the closing of beaches for space flight activities in an applicable county:

- a requirement for the governing body of a municipality to which proposed primary and backup dates for space flight activities are submitted to compel by ordinance the evacuation of any unauthorized person from a hazard area, as calculated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under applicable federal regulations, on the date on which space flight activities are conducted; and
- an authorization for a commissioners court to which proposed primary and backup dates for space flight activities are submitted to compel by order the evacuation of any unauthorized person from a hazard area, as calculated by the FAA under applicable federal regulations, on the date on which space flight activities are conducted.

The bill creates a Class B misdemeanor offense for a person who violates an ordinance or order adopted under the bill's provisions and enhances the penalty for a subsequent conviction of the offense to a Class A misdemeanor.

S.B. 2230 takes effect only if S.B. 2188 or similar legislation of the 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025, relating to the closure of beaches for space flight activities is enacted and becomes law. If such legislation is not enacted or does not become law, the bill has no effect.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Except as otherwise provided, on passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.