

By: King

H.B. No. 13

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to creating the Texas Interoperability Council and a grant program administered by the council.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 421, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter G to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER G. TEXAS INTEROPERABILITY COUNCIL; GRANT PROGRAM

Sec. 421.121. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Council" means the Texas Interoperability Council established under this subchapter.

(2) "Division" means Texas Division of Emergency Management.

(3) "Local government" means a municipality, county, special district or authority, or any other political subdivision of this state.

Sec. 421.122. TEXAS INTEROPERABILITY COUNCIL. (a) The Texas Interoperability Council is established to:

(1) develop and coordinate the implementation of a statewide strategic plan for governing the interoperability of emergency communication equipment and infrastructure in this state; and

(2) administer a grant program to assist local governments with acquiring emergency communication equipment that is interoperable with other emergency communication equipment and

1 infrastructure in this state and with constructing additional
2 emergency communication infrastructure to ensure that the first
3 responders of this state have access to equipment and
4 infrastructure that is interoperable to the extent necessary to
5 effectively communicate during an emergency.

6 (b) The council is composed of the chief of the division and
7 six members appointed as follows:

8 (1) two members appointed by the governor;

9 (2) two members appointed by the lieutenant governor;

10 and

11 (3) two members appointed by the speaker of the house
12 of representatives.

13 (c) Appointed council members serve staggered terms of six
14 years, with the terms of two members expiring September 1 of each
15 odd-numbered year.

16 (d) A majority of the voting members of the council
17 constitutes a quorum to transact business. If a quorum is present,
18 the council may act on any matter within the council's jurisdiction
19 by a majority vote.

20 (e) The chief of the division serves as the council's
21 presiding officer.

22 Sec. 421.123. MEETINGS. The council shall meet as often as
23 necessary at the call of the presiding officer to perform the
24 council's duties.

25 Sec. 421.124. APPLICABILITY OF OTHER LAW TO COUNCIL. (a)
26 Chapters 551 and 2001 do not apply to the council.

27 (b) Information held by the council is excepted from

1 required public disclosure under Chapter 552.

2 Sec. 421.125. STRATEGIC PLAN. (a) The council, in
3 collaboration with any state agency or private entity as the
4 council determines appropriate, shall develop a statewide
5 strategic plan to govern the interoperability of emergency
6 communication equipment and infrastructure in this state.

7 (b) The strategic plan must include:

8 (1) a plan for the construction of communication
9 infrastructure necessary to ensure effective emergency
10 communications among first responders in this state, including the
11 acquisition of land as necessary for construction;

12 (2) training programs necessary to ensure that state
13 and local governments have the skills and resources necessary to
14 access and effectively use the emergency communication equipment
15 and infrastructure available in this state;

16 (3) a plan to ensure that first responders throughout
17 this state are equipped with emergency communication equipment that
18 is interoperable with other emergency communication equipment in
19 this state; and

20 (4) a plan to ensure that any new emergency
21 communication equipment and infrastructure acquired or constructed
22 under the plan can be adapted to or integrated with any existing
23 emergency communication equipment and infrastructure.

24 Sec. 421.126. IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN; NETWORK MANAGEMENT.

25 The council, in collaboration with state agencies as needed, shall
26 implement the statewide strategic plan developed under Section
27 421.125 and coordinate the emergency communications network of this

1 state to ensure interoperability for first responders.

2 Sec. 421.127. GRANT PROGRAM. (a) The council shall
3 establish a grant program to provide grants to local governments
4 for the purchase of emergency communication equipment and
5 infrastructure, the construction of emergency communication
6 infrastructure, and the expenses of training employees of the local
7 government for the effective use of the equipment during an
8 emergency.

9 (b) To be eligible for a grant under the grant program, an
10 applicant must be a local government, submit a proposal to the
11 council, and comply with the rules established by the council for
12 the administration of the grant program.

13 (c) The council shall establish procedures to administer
14 the grant program, including:

- 15 (1) eligibility criteria for a grant recipient;
16 (2) guidelines relating to grant amounts; and
17 (3) procedures for submitting and evaluating
18 proposals.

19 (d) The council shall enter into a contract that includes
20 performance requirements with each grant recipient. The council
21 shall monitor and enforce the terms of the contract.

22 (e) The council may require as a condition of a grant
23 awarded under this section that:

- 24 (1) the officers or employees of the recipient
25 successfully complete one or more training programs, as determined
26 by the council, which may include incident command system training;
27 and

1 (2) the recipient adopt standardized procedures for
2 incident command or management.

3 (f) The council may delegate to a state agency the
4 administration of the grant program.

5 Sec. 421.128. USES OF GRANT MONEY. Money awarded under the
6 grant program may be used only to:

7 (1) purchase emergency communication equipment,
8 including radios, spare parts, and accessories, for use by first
9 responders that is interoperable with the other emergency
10 communication equipment and infrastructure in this state or enables
11 interoperability;

12 (2) construct emergency communication infrastructure,
13 including radio towers, that is interoperable with the other
14 emergency communication equipment and infrastructure in this state
15 or enables interoperability, including the acquisition of land
16 necessary for the construction;

17 (3) cover the cost of adapting existing emergency
18 communication equipment or infrastructure to, or otherwise
19 integrating the equipment or infrastructure with, new emergency
20 communication equipment purchased or infrastructure constructed;

21 (4) cover the operational or maintenance cost of the
22 equipment or infrastructure described by Subdivision (1), (2), or
23 (3); or

24 (5) attend or provide the training to first responders
25 on the effective use of the equipment and infrastructure described
26 by Subdivisions (1), (2), and (3).

27 Sec. 421.129. GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING. The council may use

1 any available funds to implement the grant program.

2 Sec. 421.130. GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS. The council
3 may accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source, including
4 private and nonprofit organizations, for the purpose of
5 implementing this subchapter.

6 Sec. 421.131. RULES. The division may adopt rules to
7 administer this subchapter.

8 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date
9 of this Act, the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the
10 house of representatives shall appoint members to the Texas
11 Interoperability Council, as required by Section 421.122,
12 Government Code, as added by this Act, in the manner required by
13 that section, as follows:

14 (1) the governor shall appoint two council members to
15 a term expiring September 1, 2027;

16 (2) the lieutenant governor shall appoint two council
17 members to a term expiring September 1, 2029; and

18 (3) the speaker of the house of representatives shall
19 appoint two council members to a term expiring September 1, 2031.

20 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.