

By: Sparks, et al.
(King)

S.B. No. 34

Substitute the following for S.B. No. 34:

By: King

C.S.S.B. No. 34

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to funding for certain volunteer fire departments, to the preparation for and the prevention, management, and potential effects of wildfires, and to emergency communications in this state.

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

SECTION 1. (a) In this section:

(1) "Fuel loading" means the amount of combustible material in a defined space expressed quantitatively in terms of weight of fuel per unit area.

(2) "Service" means the Texas A&M Forest Service.

(3) "University" means West Texas A&M University.

(b) The service and university shall jointly conduct a study to determine the status and condition of fuel loading in wildfire risk zones in this state and the corresponding risk of wildfire to the residents, homes, businesses, and ecology of this state.

(c) In conducting the study, the service and university shall:

(1) establish wildfire risk zones based on fuel loading and the risk of wildfire to the residents, homes, businesses, and ecology of this state within geographic areas defined by the service; and

(2) solicit and consider information from:

(A) the Department of Public Safety;

(B) the Department of Agriculture, including the Prescribed Burning Board;

(C) the Texas Division of Emergency Management;

(D) the Parks and Wildlife Department;

(E) the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;

(F) the State Soil and Water Conservation Board;

(G) the comptroller of public accounts; and

(H) other natural resource representatives as necessary.

(d) The study must:

(1) for each wildfire risk zone established under Subsection (c)(1) of this section, consider:

(A) the risk that fuel loading poses;

(B) the projected loss of life, property, and natural resources should a wildfire occur in the zone;

(C) the financial impact of costs associated with:

(i) reconstruction in the zone after a wildfire;

(ii) potential loss of production in the natural resource and agricultural industries in the zone after a wildfire; and

(iii) fuel loading mitigation and asset hardening in the zone; and

(D) whether the money invested in fuel loading mitigation in the zone exceeds or is less than the value of property

1 protected by the investment and the amount of the excess or
2 shortage;

3 (2) assess the overall economic benefits to this state
4 of:

5 (A) prescribed burning;

6 (B) fuel loading control for wildfire
7 prevention; and

8 (C) public investment in fuel loading reduction
9 projects; and

10 (3) recommend changes to existing law to ensure that
11 public and private natural resource managers have the authority and
12 ability to appropriately mitigate fuel loading risks in each
13 established risk zone.

14 (e) Not later than December 1, 2026, the service and
15 university shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor,
16 the speaker of the house of representatives, and each standing
17 committee of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over the
18 service or university or another state agency from which
19 information is solicited under this section a written report that
20 includes a summary of the study and any legislative recommendations
21 based on the study.

22 (f) This section expires May 1, 2027.

23 SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 88, Education Code, is
24 amended by adding Section 88.1255 to read as follows:

25 Sec. 88.1255. STATEWIDE DATABASE OF FIREFIGHTING
26 EQUIPMENT. (a) In this section, "fire department" means:

27 (1) a volunteer fire department; or

1 (2) a department of a municipality, county, or special
2 district or authority that provides firefighting services.

3 (b) The Texas A&M Forest Service shall create and maintain a
4 comprehensive database that shows in real time the statewide
5 inventory of firefighting equipment available for use in responding
6 to wildfires.

7 (c) The database must:

8 (1) include a description of the type of firefighting
9 equipment each fire department in this state has available for use
10 in responding to wildfires;

11 (2) include contact information for the fire
12 department with the equipment;

13 (3) be searchable by location and equipment type; and

14 (4) be accessible by all fire departments in this
15 state and allow each fire department to update the database
16 information regarding the fire department's available equipment.

17 (d) The Texas A&M Forest Service shall:

18 (1) establish and maintain an electronic system to at
19 least annually notify a fire department that provides the
20 department's firefighting equipment information to the database of
21 the requirement to update the information in the database; and

22 (2) assist a fire department that provides the
23 department's firefighting equipment information to the database in
24 updating the database annually or as soon as practicable after any
25 change in equipment availability.

26 SECTION 3. Section [614.102](#), Government Code, is amended by
27 adding Subsection (i) to read as follows:

1 (i) At least 10 percent of appropriations for a state fiscal
2 year from the fund for the purpose of providing assistance to
3 volunteer fire departments under the program is allocated for
4 volunteer fire departments located in areas of this state the
5 service determines are at high risk for large wildfires. If the
6 amount of assistance requested under this subsection in a state
7 fiscal year is less than the amount allocated under this
8 subsection, the remainder may be used for other types of assistance
9 requests.

10 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.