

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1122
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Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Concerns have been raised, including by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) task force of border health officials, regarding the increased public health risks posed by foodborne, waterborne, vector-borne, and zoonotic diseases and contaminants in the border region due to a lack of adequate solid waste management and the prevalence of illegal dumping. Additionally, it has been suggested that the lack of infrastructure, funding, and capacity for identification and testing of foodborne and waterborne diseases contributes to the increased risk for disease threats in the region. S.B. 1122 seeks to address these concerns by requiring DSHS to establish a sanitarian recruitment and retention grant program in border counties.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change 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. 1122 amends the Health and Safety Code to require the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), to the extent funds are available, to develop a program under which DSHS does the following:

- provides grants to local health units, local health departments, and public health districts located in a county along the international border with Mexico and affiliated with DSHS to improve recruitment and retention of registered sanitarians; and
- expands opportunities for training and registration of sanitarians to improve disease response and prevent foodborne, waterborne, vector-borne, and zoonotic diseases.

S.B. 1122 requires DSHS to administer the grant program in coordination with specified entities and authorizes DSHS to provide a grant only in accordance with a contract between DSHS and the recipient that includes provisions under which DSHS is granted sufficient control to ensure the public purpose of improved public health is accomplished and the state receives the return benefit. The bill authorizes DSHS to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations to operate the grant program and requires DSHS to coordinate with appropriate state and federal agencies and other specified entities in identifying and soliciting funding to implement the bill's provisions. The bill establishes that DSHS is required to implement a provision of the bill only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose and if not, that DSHS may, but is

not required to, implement such a provision using other appropriations available for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.