

SUBJECT: Railroad Commission discretion to conduct continuing education

COMMITTEE: Energy Resources — favorable, as substituted

VOTE: 6 ayes — West, Farabee, Corte, Crownover, Gonzalez Toureilles, Howard

0 nays

1 absent — Crabb

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Under Natural Resources Code, ch. 116, any person engaging in activities associated with compressed natural gas (CNG) or liquefied natural gas (LNG), such as installation, sales, and transportation, must be certified — registered or licensed — by the Texas Railroad Commission. The Railroad Commission establishes training and education requirements for applicants and holders of CNG and LNG registrations and licenses.

DIGEST: HB 1162 would make optional the Railroad Commission's provision of continuing education requirements to holders of CNG and LNG certificates. The commission still would be required to oversee examination requirements for applicants who sought certification.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2005.

SUPPORTERS SAY: CSHB 1162 would grant the Railroad Commission flexibility in determining how to meet continuing education needs for CNG and LNG certificate holders. Currently, the Railroad Commission's Alternative Fuels Research and Education Division oversees the CNG and LNG educational program for approximately 200 certificate holders in Texas, most of whom are employed by large companies that provide training or continuing education programs similar to the agency's. This bill would permit the agency to discontinue or otherwise alter its continuing education requirement for certificate holders who proved to the commission's satisfaction that they already were receiving equal or better training elsewhere. In such cases, the bill would allow the agency to direct its resources toward certificate holders who had greater training needs.

The bill would not undermine safety standards. Applicants for CNG and LNG certification still would be required to meet the agency's training and examination requirements.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

This bill could undermine safety standards by removing the agency from the continuing education process. Only through the direct administration of training and continuing education could the agency be certain that all certificate holders were qualified to work with these potentially dangerous materials.

NOTES:

The committee substitute added that the Railroad Commission would oversee and administer rules and examinations for CNG and LNG certification.