

- SUBJECT:** Identifying priority infrastructure for electric service in disaster
- COMMITTEE:** Defense and Veterans' Affairs — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Corte, Vaught, Chavez, Edwards, Farias, Maldonado, Ortiz, Pickett, C. Turner
0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Gilbert Hughes, AEP Texas, Association of Electric Companies of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Julianne Acevedo, Texas Fire Chiefs Association; Darrin Hall, City of Houston - Office of the Mayor; Tami Miller, CenterPoint Energy
Against — None
- DIGEST:** CSHB 2532 would amend the Government Code to require municipalities and counties to provide the Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM) with the location of infrastructure that was critical to public health and safety and that required electricity to adequately respond to the effects of a disaster or emergency.
- Municipalities and counties would be required to file a form provided by the GDEM annually, providing information about the location of infrastructure by street address or other means.
- The municipality or county would have to rank the critical infrastructure on the form by priority and would have to include:
- police and fire stations;
 - relevant government buildings;
 - sewage lift stations;
 - water treatment facilities; and
 - hospitals.
- The GDEM, with assistance from the Public Utility Commission (PUC), would be required each year by March 1 to provide each electric utility that owned electric transmission and distribution lines the critical infrastructure location information for each municipality or county served

by the utility. The electric utilities would be required to maintain the information and update it annually.

The PUC would have to adopt rules to ensure compliance.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2009.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 2532 is an effort to provide rapid mitigation of disasters or emergencies that result in widespread electric utility service outages. In the aftermath of Hurricane Ike, a lack of critical services hampered the ability of communities to recover from the storm. Entities such as wastewater treatment plants, fire and police stations, sewer lift stations, and hospitals experienced prolonged periods without electrical service because electric transmission and distribution utilities lacked information on the facilities or had outdated locations or addresses.

Under CSHB 2532, the Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM) would facilitate the reporting of addresses designated by municipalities and counties as critical infrastructure so that when there was an electrical outage, the utilities would know which facilities should be restored first. This would help restore the system more efficiently. It is a waste of time and resources to try to determine which locations are critical after the storm has occurred. CSHB 2532 would ensure that localities were better prepared for a future disaster or emergency.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The goal of this legislation is appropriate, but it is important that electric utilities be allowed some flexibility in the restoration process because each emergency or disaster is unique. For example, flooding could prevent a utility from reaching the facility that was designated as the first priority, making it preferable to go on to another location. Also, the number of priorities assigned should be limited to those that are the most critical and provide for the most people.

NOTES:

The committee substitute differs from the bill as filed by adding counties and requiring a priority ranking for critical facilities.