SUBJECT: Creating an emergency radio infrastructure revolving loan program

COMMITTEE: Homeland Security and Public Safety — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Nevárez, Paul, Burns, Calanni, Clardy, Goodwin, Israel, Lang

1 nay — Tinderholt

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Tammy Embrey, City of Corpus Christi; Charley Wilkison, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas; Tom Oney, Lower Colorado River Authority; Monty Wynn, Texas Municipal League)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Government Code ch. 411, subch. N establishes the emergency radio infrastructure account. Local Government Code sec. 133.102 allocates a portion of criminal fees consolidated on conviction to this account. These fees may be used only for emergency infrastructure-related purposes and may not be used to purchase or maintain radio subscriber equipment.

DIGEST: CSHB 2952 would replace the emergency radio infrastructure account with a revolving loan account managed by the Office of the Governor. This account would be used to provide loans to finance interoperable statewide emergency radio infrastructure.

The Office of the Governor would determine the terms under which a loan could be made and set the interest rate for a loan at a low rate the office determined would be sufficient to recover the cost of administering the program. Payments on loans from this account would be made to the Office of the Governor. Repayments of loan principal would be used to make new loans.

The Office of the Governor could make a forgivable loan at a zero percent interest rate for a period of five years to a qualifying entity. The office could not forgive more than one-fifth of the forgivable loan amount each year.

All money in the emergency radio infrastructure account would be transferred to the emergency radio infrastructure revolving loan account on the bill's effective date and could only be used for loans as described by the bill.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.