

**SUBJECT:** Preventing mosquito diseases along the Mexican border; authorizing a fee

**COMMITTEE:** Agriculture and Livestock — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Springer, Anderson, Beckley, Buckley, Burns, Fierro, Meza, Raymond

0 nays

1 absent — Zwiener

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 24 — 31-0

**WITNESSES:** No public hearing

**BACKGROUND:** Interested parties have suggested there is an increasing need to address the public health threat of mosquito-born diseases in the state's border region, where these diseases pose a greater threat due to a lack of licensed mosquito control applicators and other resources.

**DIGEST:** SB 1312 would require the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) by rule to provide for the issuance of noncommercial applicator licenses that would authorize a person to purchase and use restricted-use and state-limited-use pesticides for the limited purpose of mosquito control in a county located along the Texas-Mexico border.

The department would have to minimize any fees or other requirements to obtain a license to the extent practicable and would be required to issue a license to applicants that met the requirements provided by department rule.

TDA would coordinate with appropriate federal and state agencies, nonprofit organizations, hospitals, institutions of higher education, and private entities to identify and solicit funding to implement and administer this requirement. The department could solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations to implement and administer the bill's provisions.

The bill also would require the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to address vector-borne and zoonotic diseases in border counties by consulting with TDA and other appropriate agencies to study:

- border counties' ongoing and potential needs related to these diseases;
- the availability of and capacity for the mitigation and control of these diseases, including increased staffing, equipment, education, and training; and
- strategies to improve or develop continuing education and public outreach initiatives for the prevention of such diseases.

DSHS also would be required to develop rapid local and regional response and support plans for ongoing vector-borne and zoonotic disease control activities and disasters. The department would have to perform any administrative actions necessary to address the findings from the study performed in consultation with TDA and implement any appropriate strategies developed under the bill.

DSHS would be required to coordinate with appropriate federal and state agencies, nonprofit organizations, public and private hospitals, institutions of higher education, and private entities to implement and administer the bill's provisions, and could accept gifts, grants, and donations for these purposes.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2019.