

SUBJECT: Texas A&M Engineering Station participation in skills development fund

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 10 ayes — Murphy, Pacheco, Cortez, P. King, Muñoz, Ortega, Parker, Raney, C. Turner, J. Turner

0 nays

1 absent — Frullo

WITNESSES: For — Jose Leos, MDX Consulting; Luis Cristerna, Tucker Construction; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Manufacturers)

Against — None

On — Cindy Lawley, Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station; Mary York, Texas Workforce Commission

BACKGROUND: Labor Code ch. 303 establishes a skills development fund to provide grant money for workforce training through community or technical colleges, the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, community-based organizations in partnership with one of those entities, or local workforce development boards.

Interested parties note that the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station offers programs that develop the state's workforce through education and training and should be eligible for funding.

DIGEST: CSHB 3186 would include the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station among the higher education entities eligible for support from the skills development fund for the following purposes:

- to recover costs incurred in developing customized assessment and training in certain high-demand occupations;

- to receive start-up or emergency funds for certain job-training purposes;
- to offer training programs that are statewide in nature or are not available from a local junior college district, a local technical college, or a consortium of junior college districts; and
- to provide training in partnership with other eligible entities.

The Texas Workforce Commission would have to adopt a procedure under which an employer could seek and obtain direct reimbursement from the fund for costs incurred by the employer for customized training completed by the employer's employees under a grant agreement.

The bill would subject the experiment station and any of its training programs supported by the fund to certain biennial review and reporting requirements.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.