

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.C.R. 68
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Administration
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As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, major portions of Texas have endured nature's wrath in the weather extremes of the 1990s. In October 1998, historic floods occurred across much of South Texas. Governor Bush declared a state of disaster in 22 counties. President Clinton concurred and by presidential declaration authorized federal aid. The general public, municipalities, and counties all endured major losses. Local officials have expended considerable time and energy completing disaster documentation for submittal to the Division of Emergency Management (DEM), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and Natural Resource Conservation Service. The Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin has been involved with the City of Cuero concerning their housing issues caused by this disaster. The legislature approved and added \$16.3 million to the emergency appropriations bill to assist local communities with state funds necessary to match federal dollars, due to the magnitude of the disaster. Difficulties have occurred in coordinating the disaster-related activities of local, state, and federal representatives, and this lack of coordination has caused the general public great hardship. S.C.R. 68 would establish a blue ribbon study to examine ways to improve the coordination among the entities responsible for providing assistance in disasters to streamline the process and facilitate service to victims, and would provide that the committee consists of representatives from the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, Texas Water Development Board, General Land Office, and Division of Emergency Management as well as municipalities, counties and river authorities.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.C.R. 68 submits the following resolutions:

That the 76th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby create a blue ribbon study to examine ways to improve coordination among the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), Small Business Administration Volunteer Organization, Division of Emergency Management (DEM), and General Land Office (GLO) in mitigating damage by taking action before, as well as providing disaster assistance after, flooding and other natural disasters and to streamline the provision of disaster assistance.

That the committee consist of representatives from TNRCC, TWDB, GLO, DEM as well as municipalities, counties, and river authorities, with TNRCC serving as chair.

That appropriate federal agencies act as a resource to the committee as necessary and that the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin, may also act as a resource to the committee as necessary.

That the committee deliver the study to the 77th Legislature with recommendations when it convenes in January, 2001.