

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
81R17635 KSD-D

H.B. 2914  
By: McReynolds et al. (Nichols)  
Agriculture & Rural Affairs  
5/8/2009  
Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The wildland urban interface, where subdivisions and businesses meet surrounding forests and fields and the fuel sources they contain, is susceptible to fire risks. A pilot program will allow Texas communities to work with their local volunteer fire departments and apply for grant money to either reduce fuel loads or undertake projects to reduce the fire hazard in such interface areas. These actions will help prevent wildfires in our communities.

H.B. 2914 authorizes the Texas Forest Service to establish and administer a fuel mitigation pilot grant program to assist with the costs of fuel mitigation. The bill allows the Texas Forest Service to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from public or private sources to help fund this pilot program.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Forest Service in SECTION 1 (Section 88.121, Education Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 88, Education Code, by adding Section 88.121, as follows:

Sec. 88.121. FUEL MITIGATION PILOT GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Authorizes the Texas Forest Service (TFS), with the advice of the advisory committee established under Section 614.073 (Advisory Committee), Government Code, to establish and administer a pilot program under this section to provide grants to fire departments to assist with the costs of fuel mitigation and adopt rules consistent with this section as necessary to implement this section, including rules establishing reasonable criteria and qualifications for the distribution of grant money under the pilot program and a procedure for reporting and processing requests for grant money under the pilot program.

(b) Authorizes TFS to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for purposes of this section.

(c) Requires the director of TFS, if TFS establishes a pilot program under this section, not later than December 1, 2010, to submit a written report to the legislature on the effectiveness of the pilot program in mitigating fuel hazards.

(d) Authorizes money in the rural volunteer fire department insurance fund, notwithstanding Section 614.075(b) (relating to authorization of money in the fund to be used only for a purpose under this subchapter), Government Code, to also be used for purposes of the pilot program under this section.

(e) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2011.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.