

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R21980 AAF-F

H.B. 2325
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Business & Commerce
5/1/2019
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Bill Summary

Section 1

- Texas Division of Emergency Management and Texas A&M Agrilife will coordinate efforts to make 9-1-1 systems capable of receiving text messages.
- TDEM is to develop standards for social media use during and after a disaster.
- TDEM shall develop a mobile app for cell phones for critical information communications during a disaster.
- TDEM is to create a web portal clearinghouse for programs and services available to disaster victims.
- TDEM shall use data analytics to integrate data from multiple sources.
- TDEM shall conduct a study on first responder communications and look to creating a common operating framework for communications during a disaster.

Section 2

- Requires public awareness campaigns on disaster preparedness from multiple agencies.

Section 3

- Requires local emergency officials to develop a plan and publish said plan for using the state's assistance registry, known as the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry. This registry already exists, and it allows vulnerable individuals to pre-register for assistance during any kind of disaster.

H.B. 2325 amends current law relating to providing information and communication regarding and during a disaster.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 418, Government Code, by adding Sections 418.054, 418.055, 418.056, 418.057, 418.058, and 418.059, as follows:

Sec. 418.054. COORDINATING 9-1-1 TEXT MESSAGE CAPABILITY. Requires the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), in consultation with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, to coordinate state and local government efforts to make 9-1-1 emergency service capable of receiving text messages from a cellular telephone or other wireless communication device.

Sec. 418.055. SOCIAL MEDIA USE DURING AND AFTER DISASTERS. Requires TDEM, in consultation with any state agency or private entity TDEM determines is appropriate, to develop standards for the use of social media as a communication tool by governmental entities during and after a disaster. Requires the standards to:

- (1) require state agencies, political subdivisions, first responders, and volunteers that use social media during and after a disaster to post consistent and clear information;
- (2) optimize the effectiveness of social media use during and after a disaster; and
- (3) require that certain official social media accounts be used during and after a disaster only for providing credible sources of information.

Sec. 418.056. DISASTER MOBILE APPLICATION. (a) Requires TDEM to develop a mobile application for wireless communication devices to communicate critical information during a disaster directly to disaster victims and first responders.

(b) Authorizes the mobile application to provide information on:

- (1) road and weather conditions during a disaster; and
- (2) disaster response and recovery activities.

Sec. 418.057. DISASTER WEB PORTAL. Requires TDEM to develop a comprehensive disaster web portal. Requires the web portal to:

- (1) provide disaster information to the public, including information on programs and services available to disaster victims and funding for and expenditures of disaster assistance programs;
- (2) include information on disaster response and recovery activities; and
- (3) provide information on obtaining assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, state agencies, organized volunteer groups, and any other entities providing disaster assistance.

Sec. 418.058. USE OF DATA ANALYTICS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT. Requires TDEM, to the extent feasible, to use data analytics software to integrate data from federal, state, local, and nongovernmental sources to more effectively manage disaster response and recovery.

Sec. 418.059. STUDY ON STANDARD COMMUNICATION FORMAT. (a) Requires TDEM, to improve the state's response to disasters, to conduct a study on the use of a standard communication format by first responders to create a common interoperable operating framework during a disaster. Requires the study to:

- (1) examine the costs and benefits of promoting the use of a standard communication format to create a comprehensive common operating framework that is interoperable across networks;
- (2) identify any costs that first responders may incur in acquiring equipment complying with a standard communication format; and
- (3) identify necessary actions to adopt a standard communication format.

(b) Requires TDEM, not later than September 1, 2020, to submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, and members of the legislature a report on the findings of the study.

(c) Provides that this section expires December 1, 2020.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter F, Chapter 418, Government Code, by adding Section 418.127, as follows:

Sec. 418.127. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY OUTREACH. Requires the following entities, to the extent practicable, to conduct community outreach, including public awareness campaigns, and education activities on disaster preparedness each year:

- (1) municipalities and counties;
- (2) the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS), including TDEM;
- (3) the Texas Education Agency;
- (4) the office of comptroller of public accounts of the State of Texas;
- (5) the Texas Department of Insurance;
- (6) the Texas Department of Transportation;
- (7) the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs;
- (8) the Health and Human Services Commission; and
- (9) the Department of State Health Services.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter H, Chapter 418, Government Code, by adding Section 418.193, as follows:

Sec. 418.193. LOCAL EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE REGISTRY PLANS. (a) Defines "emergency assistance registry" for purposes of this section.

(b) Requires an emergency management director described by Section 418.1015 (Emergency Management Directors) to develop a plan to use information from the emergency assistance registry during the political subdivision's response to a disaster. Requires the emergency management director to publish the plan on:

- (1) the political subdivision's Internet website; and
- (2) DPS's Internet website in accordance with Subsection (c).

(c) Requires TDEM to develop a process by which a plan developed by an emergency management director under Subsection (b) may be published to DPS's Internet website. Requires TDEM to establish a designated area on the DPS's Internet website for the public to view the plan.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2019.