

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
89R19311 ANG-D

H.B. 143  
By: King et al. (Hancock)  
Natural Resources  
4/14/2025  
Engrossed

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

Following the April 2024 hearings by the Texas House Investigative Committee on the Panhandle Wildfires, the committee noted in its interim report of testimony indicating the need for the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) and the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) to work cooperatively to ensure that safety concerns at well sites were handled appropriately. After the hearings, the RRC and the PUC developed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the agencies to work together when a safety concern is noticed at a well site or surface facility. The MOU allowed the agencies to work cooperatively to ensure that electrical power lines that did not meet standards were addressed accordingly.

H.B. 143 seeks to place this MOU into statute to ensure the RRC and PUC have the statutory authority to enforce collaborative efforts when addressing safety concerns and utility service by requiring specific procedures of action.

H.B. 143 amends current law relating to the authority of the Railroad Commission of Texas and the Public Utility Commission of Texas to address a failure by an operator to maintain an electrical power line serving a well site or certain surface facilities in accordance with the National Electrical Code.

### **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 Section 91.019, Natural Resources Code, as follows:

Sec. 91.019. STANDARDS FOR CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRICAL POWER LINES. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Requires an operator to construct, operate, and maintain an electrical power line serving a well site or other surface facility employed in operations incident to oil and gas development and production in accordance with certain codes, including 16 T.A.C. Sections 25.94, 25.95, and 25.96, as those provisions existed on September 1, 2025, if the operator is a utility as defined by Section 11.004 (Definition of Utility), Utilities Code, engaged in the maintenance of an electronic transmission and distribution system. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(b) Requires the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC), if, during an inspection by RRC of a well site or surface facility employed in operations incident to oil and gas development and production or on the receipt of a written notice submitted by a landowner or lessee, RRC discovers a condition involving an electrical power line, pole, or any other related electrical equipment that does not meet the standards described by Subsection (a) and poses a risk of causing a fire or injury to a person, not later than three days after the discovery of the condition, to notify the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) and the operator. Requires that the notification provided by RRC include a description of the condition and whether the well is abandoned. Requires RRC and the PUC, to

resolve the condition, in collaboration, not later than 10 days after the PUC receives notice from RRC, to notify the landowner of the condition and inform the landowner of the actions RRC and the PUC will take to resolve the condition, and:

(1) request that the state fire marshal or a local government authority inspect the condition at the well site or surface facility and require the operator to mitigate any dangerous conditions identified by the state fire marshal or local government authority;

(2) request that the electric utility that provides electric service to the well site or surface facility investigate the condition and disconnect electric service to the well site or surface facility, if necessary; or

(3) take any other action RRC and the PUC consider necessary and appropriate to resolve the condition.

(c) Requires an electric utility, if electric service was disconnected by the utility, pursuant to a request made under Subsection (b)(2), to restore electric service to the well site or surface facility on receipt of notice by RRC that the condition has been resolved.

SECTION 2. Makes application of Section 91.019, Natural Resources Code, as amended by this Act, prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2025.