

SUBJECT: Use of information for notice about a municipality's alarm system policy

COMMITTEE: Urban Affairs —favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Bailey, Murphy, Menendez, Latham, Mallory Caraway,
Martinez Fischer

0 nays

1 absent — Cohen

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Under Local Government code, ch. 214, subch. F, a municipality may require its residents to obtain a permit before using an alarm system. Municipalities may charge a fee for this permit, but not more than \$50 a year per residence. Occupations Code, sec. 1702.284 permits municipalities to collect and keep confidential data about the location of alarm systems in the area.

Local Government Code, sec. 214.199 prohibits municipalities from adopting an ordinance providing that law enforcement will not respond to an alarm signal unless the municipality makes reasonable efforts to contact permit holders to notify them about the ordinance and conducts a public hearing where interested parties may voice their concerns.

DIGEST: HB 1784 would amend Local Government Code, sec. 214.199 to stipulate that if a municipality adopted or proposed adopting an ordinance providing that law enforcement would not respond to an alarm signal, the municipality would have to notify permit holders that they could contract with a security services provider, licensed by the Texas Private Security Board, to respond to an alarm. The notice would include the telephone number and Internet address of the Texas Private Security Board.

HB 1784 also would amend Occupations Code, sec. 1702.284 to allow a municipality to use confidential data about locations of alarm systems to inform permit holders about the municipality's alarm system response policy and any proposed changes and to inform the permit holder of the option to contract with a security services provider to respond to an alarm.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2007, and would apply to an ordinance in effect on the effective date or proposed for adoption on or after that date.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 1784 would allow residents to be better informed about any city policy changes concerning their alarm system. The bill would provide residents with additional protection by requiring the municipalities give them notice and information about changes in the alarm response policy that concerned their safety.

Recently, the city of Dallas tried to move to a verified alarm response program, where law enforcement officers would respond only to a panic button alarm or to an alarm verified by a witness or a video camera monitoring system. However, because the change did not provide for law enforcement officers not to respond to alarms, the city was not permitted to contact permit holders to inform them of the change in policy.

This bill would limit the use of alarm system data to occasions when a municipality had to contact permit holders to inform them of any changes proposed for alarm system policy. This is data to which the municipality already would have access. The use of this data would be restricted but would allow permit holders to remain active in decisions about their safety. Municipalities are in favor of the bill because the additional cost for notification would be less than the cost that municipalities spend responding to alarms.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

A floor amendment offered by the author would amend HB 1784 to make the notice requirement permissive. If notice were given, the notice still would have to include the board's telephone number and Internet website address. The amendment also would not apply the bill's requirements to ordinances in effect on the bill's effective date.