

SUBJECT: Developing a disaster preparation plan for political subdivisions

COMMITTEE: Homeland Security and Public Safety — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Nevárez, Paul, Burns, Calanni, Clardy, Goodwin, Israel, Lang, Tinderholt
0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Burt Mills, Aransas County; William DiLibero, City of Port Lavaca; Patrick Rios, City of Rockport; Daryl Fowler, DeWitt County, Texas; Jimmy Kendrick, Town of Fulton; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Tammy Embrey, City of Corpus Christi; Randy Cain and Clifford Sparks, City of Dallas; Fatima Mann, Community Advocacy and Healing Project; Jim Allison, County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas; Priscilla Camacho, Dallas Regional Chamber; Trent Townsend, DRC Emergency Services; Tom Oney, Lower Colorado River Authority; Joel Romo, Nueces County; Russell Schaffner, Tarrant County; Aurora Flores, Texas Association of Counties; Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Gabriela Villareal, Texas Conference of Urban Counties; Mike Wisko, Texas Fire Chiefs Association; Julia Parenteau, Texas Realtors; Perry Fowler, Texas Water Infrastructure Network; Kay Roach, Town of Woodsboro; Ben Zeller, Victoria County; Augustus Campbell, West Houston Association; Jeff Bauknight)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Chris Adams, Health and Human Services Commission; Nim Kidd, Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas Emergency Management Council)

BACKGROUND: Government Code sec. 418.016 allows the governor to suspend any regulatory statute prescribing the conduct of state business or the rules or orders of a state agency if compliance with the statute, rules, or orders would prevent, hinder, or delay necessary disaster relief actions.

Government Code ch. 2155 subch. I requires the comptroller to develop a schedule of multiple award contracts that have been previously awarded through a competitive process by the federal government or any other governmental entity in any state.

DIGEST:

CSHB 7 would require the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to develop a plan to assist political subdivisions with executing contracts for services these subdivisions were likely to need following a disaster. The plan would include:

- training on the benefits to political subdivisions from executing disaster preparation contracts in advance of a disaster;
- recommendations on services political subdivisions could need after a disaster, including debris management and infrastructure repair; and
- assistance to political subdivisions with finding persons capable of providing these services and assistance with executing contracts with those persons prior to a disaster.

TDEM would consult with the comptroller on including a disaster services contract on the schedule of multiple award contracts developed by the comptroller or as part of another cooperative purchasing program administered by the comptroller.

CSHB 7 also would require the governor's office to compile and maintain a comprehensive list of regulatory statutes and rules that could require suspension during a disaster.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 7 would help to improve disaster response in the state by eliminating administrative barriers and assisting local communities in procuring key emergency services before a disaster.

The bill includes recommendations from the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas, including the recommendation to create a standing list of regulatory waivers. Creating such a list of rules and statutes to be waived in responding to disasters would help expedite the process of disaster response by eliminating administrative barriers.

The bill also would help establish early access to essential goods and services during a disaster by assisting cities and counties in procuring contracts for disaster response services such as a debris removal and infrastructure repair. The bill would streamline this process by requiring consultation with the comptroller to include these disaster services contracts under the existing schedule of multiple award contracts.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No concerns identified.