

SUBJECT: Establishing provisions on electric grid security information

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 12 ayes — Hunter, Hernandez, Anchía, Dean, Geren, Guillen, Metcalf, Raymond, Slawson, Smithee, Spiller, Turner

1 nay — S. Thompson

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Tom Glass, Protect the Texas Grid; Michael Belsick; Robert Fitzpatrick; Shann Turner)

Against — None

On — Mark Bell, Association of Electric Companies of Texas (*Registered, but did not testify*: Thomas Gleeson, Public Utility Commission of Texas)

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that additional protections are needed for the state’s critical transmission substations to prevent threats to the state’s electric grid security.

DIGEST: Under CSHB 4952, the Public Utility Commission of Texas would require each electric utility, electric cooperative, municipally owned utility, river authority that owned electric transmission assets, and transmission and distribution utility to provide to the chair of the Texas Electricity Supply Chain Security and Mapping Committee the following information:

- the location of any critical facility owned or operated by the utility, cooperative, or authority;
- security measures in place to protect each critical facility against physical attack; and
- contact information for the applicable utility, cooperative, or authority.

The bill would define a “critical facility” as a transmission substation and

any associated control center the inoperability of which could result in widespread instability, uncontrolled separation, or cascading outages within an interconnection.

The committee chair could share such information related to a physical attack or a threat of a physical attack on a critical facility with a law enforcement agency that had jurisdiction of the critical facility. The bill would require the committee chair to provide the Department of Public Safety with access to such information. Such information would be confidential and not subject to disclosure.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2023.