

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
77R3179 MCK-F

S.B. 1650
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Finance
4/8/2001
As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) and other state agencies with disaster response, recovery, and mitigation responsibilities are staffed at a preparedness level and do not have sufficient personnel to effectively staff recovery and mitigation operations. Typically, this void is managed by contracting with and/or hiring temporary personnel. Should these personnel remain on the state agency payroll over 130 days they are counted as full-time employees and may impact the current full-time employee cap. As proposed, S.B. 1650 provides that such temporary personnel do not count against a state agency's full-time employee authorization.

Also currently, state agencies have a cap on travel. Normally, DEM field operations last a minimum of six weeks and can last up to seven months. Travel is essential to provide assistance to local governments for the timely and effective implementation of disaster assistance programs. In a disaster response, recovery, and mitigation scenario, a cap on travel could create delays in providing disaster relief, thus causing undue hardship. As proposed, S.B. 1650 provides that travel expenses related to providing disaster assistance in certain cases are not considered reportable under a state agency's authorized travel allowance.

This bill also provides that legislative intent and state policy demands that funds to meet disaster emergencies always be available, including funds for necessary travel expenses.

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 418.071, Government Code, as follows:

Sec. 418.071. STATE POLICY. Provides that it is the intent of the legislature and the policy of the state that funds to meet disaster emergencies always be available, including funds for travel necessary to provide state disaster assistance to political subdivisions.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 418D, Government Code, by adding Sections 418.075 and 418.076, as follows:

Sec. 418.075. TRAVEL EXPENSES. Provides that travel expenses related to providing disaster assistance in a disaster declared by the governor or the president of the United States are not considered expenses to be reported in a state agency's authorized travel allowance. Provides that this section applies only to certain travel expenses.

Sec. 418.076. STATE AGENCY TEMPORARY PERSONNEL. (a) Authorizes a state agency that is represented on the emergency management council to employ or contract with temporary personnel as necessary for certain purposes.

(b) Authorizes the agency to pay for certain employees or contract personnel.

(c) Provides that the state merit system does not apply to a person employed under Subsection (a).

(d) Provides that a person employed under Subsection (a) does not count against the state agency's full-time employee authorization.

(e) Provides that this section applies only during the time a disaster field office is operational.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2001.