

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2819
By: Darby et al. (Estes)
Natural Resources & Economic Development
7/31/2017
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The 84th Legislature created TexNet as part of its supplemental appropriations bill, H.B. 2, after increased seismicity in the Dallas-Fort Worth area led to speculation that oilfield activity, particularly disposal wells, and seismicity might be related. TexNet is a seismic monitoring program administered by The University of Texas' Bureau of Economic Geology. At the same time it created TexNet, H.B. 2 also created a nine-member Technical Advisory Committee appointed by the governor and charged with supervising the Bureau of Economic Geology's use of its funding. Under the terms of H.B. 2, at least two of the members had to represent higher education institutions and have seismic or reservoir modeling experience, at least two had to be experts from the oil and gas industry, and at least one had to be a Railroad Commission of Texas (railroad commission) seismologist. Because the Technical Advisory Committee was part of the supplemental appropriations bill from last session, it cannot continue past the present biennium unless it is re-authorized.

H.B. 2819 codifies the existence of the nine-member TexNet Technical Advisory Committee in the Higher Education title of the Education Code for the next two years. H.B. 2819 slightly changes the membership requirements by providing that the committee must have at least one representative of the railroad commission who specializes in seismology, geomechanical engineering, reservoir engineering, or another related field recommended by the executive director of the railroad commission and three representatives from the oil and gas industry. H.B. 2819 provides that the Technical Advisory Committee would continue to supervise TexNet's use of funds and prepare a report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house on December 1, 2018. In addition to its current duties, the codified Technical Advisory Committee would make recommendations regarding the acquisition and deployment of equipment, contracting with vendors, determining the scope of research associated with the program, and the scope of funds appropriated by the legislature. H.B. 2819 provides that the Technical Advisory Committee will expire September 1, 2019.

H.B. 2819 amends current law relating to the establishment of an advisory committee for the TexNet seismic monitoring program.

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 Chapter 67, Education Code, by adding Subchapter E, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER E. THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS BUREAU OF ECONOMIC GEOLOGY

Sec. 67.71. DEFINITION. Defines "bureau."

Sec. 67.72. TEXNET TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) Defines "program."

- (b) Provides that the TexNet Technical Advisory Committee (advisory committee) is established as an advisory committee within The University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology (bureau).
- (c) Provides that the advisory committee consists of nine certain members appointed by the governor.
- (d) Requires the governor to designate a member of the advisory committee as the chair of the advisory committee to serve in that capacity at the pleasure of the governor.
- (e) Prohibits a person affiliated with the bureau or under contract for services with the bureau from serving as a voting member of the advisory committee.
- (f) Requires the director of the bureau to serve, ex officio, as a nonvoting member of the advisory committee.
- (g) Sets forth the duties of the advisory committee regarding the TexNet seismic monitoring program administered by the bureau.
- (h) Requires the advisory committee, not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year, to prepare and submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of representatives a certain report.
- (i) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2019.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2017.