

- SUBJECT:** Authorizing emergency grants for volunteer fire departments
- COMMITTEE:** Agriculture and Livestock — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Springer, Anderson, Beckley, Buckley, Burns, Fierro, Meza, Raymond, Zwiener
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Chris Barron, State Firefighters and Fire Marshals Association; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Patrick Tarlton, Texas Deer Association; Marissa Patton, Texas Farm Bureau; Monty Wynn, Texas Municipal League; Robert Turner, Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Don Galloway, Texas A&M Forest Service)
- BACKGROUND:** Government Code ch. 614, subch. G governs the rural volunteer fire department assistance program, which is administered by the Texas A&M Forest Service. The program distributes money from the volunteer fire department assistance fund based on established criteria, and this funding can be used to help with the purchase of new firefighting equipment.
- Interested parties have suggested expanding the rural volunteer fire department assistance program so that grants could be used to help pay for the repair or replacement of equipment damaged or lost in a disaster.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3070 would allow a volunteer fire department whose equipment was damaged or lost in responding to a declared state of disaster to make an emergency grant request to the rural volunteer fire department assistance program. The request could be for funds for the repair or replacement of damaged or lost equipment and for the purchase of a machine to clean personal protective equipment.

The bill would require the director of the Texas A&M Forest Service to consider a volunteer fire department's need for emergency assistance when distributing money from the volunteer fire department assistance fund. The director would be required to process a request for emergency assistance before any other type of request for assistance.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.