

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 33
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Transportation & Homeland Security
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In October of 2005, Governor Rick Perry appointed a 14-member Taskforce on Evacuation, Transportation and Logistics. The taskforce was assigned to document the lessons learned from the Hurricane Rita evacuation and to reinforce the positive lessons. The taskforce was also asked to identify key challenges and make recommendations on how to improve evacuation planning and execution.

The taskforce was chaired by Jack Little of Houston and included Gordon Bethune of Houston, Dr. Theron Bowman of Arlington, Carlos Cascos of Brownsville, Trey Henderson of Lufkin, Russell Henk of San Antonio, William King of Houston, Dr. Carol Lewis of Houston, Earle Nye of Dallas, Commissioner Jerry Patterson of Austin, Karen Sexton, RN, Ph.D., of Galveston, Michael Trevino of Houston, Wade Upton of San Antonio, and Robert Walker of Freeport.

On February 14, 2006, the taskforce issued its final report to the governor and made a series of recommendations for improving the state's response to emergencies. The report also outlined a series of planning requirements aimed at improving the execution of evacuations during disasters.

The taskforce recommended that the governor have the authority to order mandatory evacuations. The taskforce found that the nature of certain disasters involving multiple jurisdictions and a large number of individuals requires a central authority to activate and coordinate the many assets and jurisdictions involved. The Governor's Division of Emergency Management has a centralized State Operations Center which brings together the state-level emergency management personnel from all agencies and provides the optimal central authority for coordinating and managing a multi-jurisdictional evacuation. The Taskforce found that if this kind of central authority had been in place, it could have resulted in improved outcomes.

As proposed, S.B. 33 authorizes the Governor to order, rather than recommend, an evacuation of a stricken or threatened area.

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 418.018(a), Government Code, to authorize the governor to order, rather than recommend, the evacuation of all or part of the population from a stricken or threatened area in the state if considered necessary.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or the 91st day after adjournment.