



82nd Session Select Interim Charges Relating to Drought and Wildfire Preparedness

October 18, 2011

Natural Resources Committee

- Review water resources and conservation measures included in the State Water Plan
- Evaluate methods to enhance existing water resources and promote water conservation across the state at all times, not just in case of severe drought conditions

Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee

- Review the impact of the drought on the Texas agricultural and ranching industry
- Develop methods and legislative recommendations to minimize the effects of drought and respond to the challenges for farmers and ranchers
- The committee should focus on the following:
 - Implementation of best management practices for agricultural conservation
 - Alternatives to federal assistance due to drought losses
 - Long-term economic impact of the drought on the agricultural sector of the Texas economy
 - Better management of federal, state, and local parkland/preserve-land to reduce fire risk, including cooperative fire mitigation efforts with surrounding properties and neighborhoods
 - Analysis of Texas forest service and land management recommendations and options from other states for mitigating risk

Economic Development Committee

- Assess the economic impact of long-term drought on all sectors of the Texas economy
- Include additional analysis of economic consequences of wildland fires
- Develop a compendium of federal, state, and local funding and other assistance alternatives for reducing the long-term economic consequences of the drought

Intergovernmental Relations Committee

- Analyze ways to better coordinate existing federal, state and local housing resources to increase access to affordable housing following a disaster
- Review best practices for fulfilling emergency short-term housing needs and developing long-term housing opportunities using existing tools, such as land trusts, land banks and other available incentives
- Review housing and development codes, and guidelines for structures in areas prone to natural disasters, and make recommendations on how these structures can be "hardened" to avoid loss
- Make recommendations to educate and enable private landowners to use best practices in fire risk mitigation, fuel reduction and urban forest management to reduce exposure to wildland fires

Subcommittee on Flooding & Evacuations

- Investigate and evaluate communication options during evacuations and make recommendations for legislative action
- The committee should focus on the following:
 - Non-voice emergency communication
 - "Near term solutions" that can be utilized prior to the implementation of Next Generation 911 technologies
 - The usage of social media to convey official information (highlighting the pros and cons of such forums)
 - Any other effective forms of communication that have been successfully used by governing and law enforcement entities

Business & Commerce Committee

- Assess the impact of extreme drought conditions on electric generation capacity
- Identify those regions of Texas that will be most affected by a lack of capacity
- Analyze response plans and make recommendations to improve and expedite those plans

Transportation & Homeland Security Committee

- Review state, local and federal emergency preparation and response efforts as they pertain to protecting lives, property and natural resources from wildland fire
- Consider ways to facilitate better communication, collaboration and response between all state agencies and stakeholders involved in wildfire prevention, mitigation and control
- Review training of emergency responders to ensure that they have the appropriate skills to respond to wildfire events
- Review best practices in urban forest management and fuel reduction policies, both regulatory as well as voluntary, to promote safe firefighting operations