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Number 3

Comptroller Releases Texas Broadband Map

On January 12, Comptroller Glenn Hegar released the interactive [Texas Broadband Development Map](#) (the “Texas Map”) identifying the areas eligible for broadband expansion funding. The Texas Map shows high-speed internet access at various speeds across the state.

For purposes of the Texas Map, “broadband service” is defined as 25 mbps downstream and 3 mbps upstream. Under state law, an area is eligible for funding if less than 80% of the serviceable locations have access to high-speed internet access.

In a [press release](#), Comptroller Hegar warns that current mapping processes and outdated definitions have rendered a significant area of the state that has insufficient broadband service ineligible for funding. He explained that there are two main reasons for this occurrence. First, the mapping process relies heavily on internet service providers’ advertised speeds that don’t necessarily match speeds on the ground. And second, state law mirrors the Federal Communications Commission’s outdated definition of high-speed internet access as 25/3 mbps.

Comptroller Hegar and the Texas Broadband Office are committed to regularly updating the Texas Map to reflect real-life conditions on the ground: “There will be multiple opportunities to challenge

the accuracy of the data, and I encourage the public, stakeholders and legislators, as well as service providers and other vendors, to engage with us on the Texas map so we have the most accurate information available.”

Get Involved During the Legislative Session

During the 88th Legislative Session, Texas cities will face many challenges and opportunities. TML will need to mobilize our membership at key points during session. The Grassroots Involvement Program (GRIP) is one way to do so. Our GRIP survey focuses on a variety of items including your areas of expertise and involvement with other professional organizations. Most importantly, the GRIP survey asks how well you know various state legislators and if you are willing to communicate with those legislators during the session. TML’s grassroots approach will be crucial to our efforts.

If you have a relationship with your legislator(s) or want to be more involved during session, please take the time to complete the [GRIP survey](#). Past efforts have proven that such participation is a highly effective tool.

We ask that you complete the survey as soon as possible.

Interim Reports Released

Last week, the League reported on various Senate and House committees releasing their interim reports in response to the charges they were tasked with studying during the intervening months between sessions. These interim reports include recommendations for actions on different policy proposals for the upcoming legislative session.

More reports were released this week by House committees. Interested city officials can view the reports by clicking on each committee, below.

[House Committee on Ways and Means](#)
[House Committee on Energy Resources](#)

Federal Infrastructure Bill Update

In November 2021, the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law. The IIJA is altogether a \$1.2 trillion bill that will invest in the nation’s core infrastructure priorities including roads, bridges, rail, transit, airports, ports, energy transmission, water systems, and broadband.

The League will monitor state and federal agencies and work with the National League of Cities (NLC) to access the latest information relating to the IIJA. We will be providing periodic updates

in the Legislative Update on resources for Texas cities on how to access IJA funding for local infrastructure projects.

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)

DOT [recently posted](#) key notices of funding opportunity in 2023 for key programs under the IJA in order to provide stakeholders with more visibility. The list gives interested city officials a roadmap for when to expect to apply for federal transportation infrastructure grants.

National League of Cities (NLC)

[The Local Infrastructure Hub](#), sponsored by NLC and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, among others, is designed to help city officials navigate the funding programs made available by the IJA. Interested city officials can sign up for the mailing list, attend virtual learning events, and access articles and other resources on some of the key IJA funding opportunities. There are [several upcoming events](#) currently listed on the Local Infrastructure Hub that provide information and training on IJA-funded grant programs.

City-Related Bills Filed

(Editor’s Note: You will find all of this session’s city-related bill summaries online at <https://www.tml.org/319/Legislative-Information>.)

Property Tax

H.B. 1244 (Shine) – Property Tax Discounts: would, among other things: (1) provide that a person is entitled to a discount for the early payment of property taxes on the amount of tax due on real property that is the person’s residence homestead as follows: (a) if a taxing unit mails its property tax bills on or before September 30, the following discounts apply: (i) three percent if the tax is paid in October or earlier; (ii) two percent if the tax is paid in November; and (iii) one percent if the tax is paid in December; and (b) if a taxing unit mails its tax bills after September 30, the following discounts apply: (i) three percent if the tax is paid before or during the next full calendar month following the date on which the tax bills were mailed; (ii) two percent if the tax is paid during the second full calendar month following the date on which the tax bills were mailed; and (iii) one percent if the tax is paid during the third full calendar month following the date on which the tax bills were mailed; (2) authorize the governing body of a taxing unit to adopt discounts for the early payment of property taxes on properties other than residence homesteads; and (3) require a mortgage servicer who pays property tax on behalf of a borrower to, on the written request of the borrower, pay the property tax on a property occupied by the borrower as the borrower’s residence homestead early enough for the borrower to qualify for the three percent discount provided in (1), above, as applicable.

H.B. 1251 (Plesa) – Property Tax Exemption: would: (1) for purposes of the property tax exemption on the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a first responder, expand the definition of “first responder” to include: (a) a special agent of United States Immigration and

Customs Enforcement; (b) a customs and border protection officer or border patrol agents of United States Customs and Border Protection; and (c) an immigration enforcement agent or deportation officer of the United States Department of Homeland Security; and (2) in the case of the surviving spouse of a first responder described by (1), above, provide that the surviving spouse is entitled to an exemption if the surviving spouse has not remarried since the death of the first responder and was a resident of this state at the time of the first responder's death.

H.B. 1294 (Muñoz) – Appraisal District Board of Directors: would: (1) change the composition of the board of directors of an appraisal district to five elected directors, one elected from each of the four commissioners precincts of the county plus either the county assessor-collector, or if the county assessor-collector is ineligible to serve on the board, one director elected at large; and (2) require that elected directors reside in the commissioners precinct from which they were elected, or for a director elected at large, in the county.

H.B. 1317 (Shine) – Electronic Communications: would require tax officials, including cities, to establish a procedure by which to communicate electronically with property owners who request electronic communication.

H.B. 1319 (Shine) – Electronic Payments: would require tax officials, including cities, to establish a procedure by which to accept payment electronically from property owners who request electronic payment.

H.J.R. 76 (Geren) – Public School Funding: would amend the Texas Constitution to require state funding of public schools in an amount that constitutes at least 50 percent of the cost of maintaining and operating the public school system.

Public Safety

H.B. 1289 (Campos) – Child Abuse and Neglect Investigation Training: would provide, among other things, that the Department of Family and Protective Services: (1) develop a training program for each person who investigates any instance of suspected child abuse or neglect at the state or local level; and (2) collaborate with appropriate law enforcement agency personnel in developing and implementing the training program.

H.B. 1341 (Wu) – Marihuana: would, among other things: (1) repeal the Texas Compassionate Use Act; (2) repeal criminal offenses related to marihuana, including delivery and possession of marihuana; and (3) remove certain regulations related to the cultivation, manufacture, delivery, and possession of marihuana and cannabis.

H.B. 1346 (Bucy) – Alcohol Sales: would authorize: (1) a local option election to be held on the proposition of whether to prohibit or legalize the sale of liquor for off-premise consumption on Sunday; and (2) in an area where the sale on Sunday of liquor for off-premises consumption has been approved by local option election: (a) the holder of a package store permit to sell, offer for sale, or deliver liquor on Sunday between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m.; (b) the holder of a wholesaler's permit to sell, offer for sale, or deliver liquor to a retailer anytime on Sunday; and (c) the holder

of a local distributor's permit to sell, offer for sale, or deliver liquor to a retailer on Sunday between 5 a.m. and 9 p.m.

H.B. 1347 (Dutton) – Resisting Arrest: would require the complaint, information, or indictment in the prosecution of a criminal case in which the sole allegation is that a person has resisted arrest to state the underlying offense for which the person was resisting arrest.

S.B. 376 (Johnson) – Peace Officer Licensing: would provide that: (1) a political subdivision, including a city, that commissions and employs peace officers may commission and employ as a peace officer a legal permanent resident of the United States; and (2) the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) shall issue a peace officer license to a person who is a legal permanent resident of the United States if the person meets the requirements to obtain a license and TCOLE's rules. (Companion bill is **H.B. 1076** by **Neave Criado**.)

S.B. 386 (Hall) – Capital Murder of Peace Officer or Firefighter: would provide that an actor charged with capital murder of a peace officer or fireman is presumed to have known that the person murdered was a peace officer or fireman if the person: (1) was wearing a distinctive uniform or badge indicating the person's employment as a peace officer or fireman; or (2) made an identification as a peace officer or fireman to the actor.

S.B. 405 (Eckhardt) – Lost or Stolen Firearm Reporting: would provide that: (1) a peace officer who receives a report from an owner of a firearm that the firearm was lost or stolen shall report the loss or theft to the Department of Public Safety (DPS); (2) require the report to include: (a) the name of the owner; (b) any available information about the firearm; and (c) the date that the owner became aware the firearm was lost or stolen; (3) DPS shall regularly send all reports received under (1), above, to the National Crime Information Center; and (4) failure to report to a peace officer or law enforcement agency a lost or stolen firearm by an owner within 24 hours after the time the person became aware the firearm was lost or stolen constitutes a criminal offense.

S.B. 432 (Middleton) – Catalytic Converter Theft: would, among other things: (1) provide that an actor in possession of property consisting of a catalytic converter that has been removed from a motor vehicle is presumed to have unlawfully appropriated the property unless the actor: (a) is the owner of the vehicle from which the catalytic converter was removed; (b) possessed the catalytic converter in the ordinary course of engaging in a business that is required to be licensed or registered or is otherwise regulated, by this state or a political subdivision of this state, including: (i) an automotive wrecking and salvage yard; (ii) a metal recycling entity; (iii) a motor vehicle dealer; or (iv) a garage or shop that is engaged in the business of repairing motor vehicles; or (c) is an employee or agent of a person described by (1), above, and the actor possessed the catalytic converter while performing a duty within the scope of that employment or agency; and (2) create a state jail felony if the value of property stolen is less than \$30,000 and the property stolen is a catalytic converter.

S.B. 443 (Menéndez) – Peace Officer Training: would provide that as part of the minimum curriculum requirements for a training program on de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques to facilitate interaction with persons with mental impairments, the program must include instruction on interacting with persons with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, including

techniques for recognizing symptoms, communicating effectively, employing alternatives to physical restraints, and identifying signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. (Companion bill is **H.B. 568** by **Bowers**.)

S.B. 446 (**Menendez**) – **Red Light Cameras**: would provide that photographic traffic signal enforcement contracts, including those executed before May 17, 2019, are void. (Companion bills **H.B. 167** and **H.B. 177** by **Cortez**)

S.B. 465 (**Bettencourt**) – **Catalytic Converter Theft**: would, among other things: (1) provide that a person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly possesses a catalytic converter that has been removed from a motor vehicle and the person is not a person who is authorized to possess the catalytic converter; (2) provide that an offense under (1), above, is a state jail felony, unless the person has been previously convicted of the same offense or engaged in conduct constituting a conspiracy to commit a certain offense with respect to a catalytic converter, in which case the offense is a third-degree felony; (3) create a state jail felony for criminal mischief if a motor vehicle that is damaged, destroyed, or tampered with during the removal or attempted removal of a catalytic converter from the motor vehicle and the amount of pecuniary loss is less than \$30,000; and (4) create a state jail felony for theft if the value of property stolen is less than \$30,000 and the property stolen is a catalytic converter.

Sales Tax

H.B. 1265 (**Button**) – **Sales Tax Exemption**: would exempt certain wound care dressing products and feminine hygiene products from the sales tax. (Companion bill is **S.B. 379** by **Huffman**.)

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Community and Economic Development

H.B. 1266 (**Schatzline**) – **Sexually Oriented Businesses**: would provide that a commercial enterprise that provides a drag performance for an audience of two or more individuals is a sexually oriented business. (Companion bill **S.B. 476** by **Hughes**.)

H.B. 1279 (**Tepper**) – **Reduction of Extraterritorial Jurisdiction**: would provide, among other things, that the extraterritorial jurisdiction of a city is the unincorporated area contiguous to the corporate boundaries located within: (1) 250 feet of those boundaries, for cities with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants; (2) 500 feet of those boundaries, for cities with 5,000 to 24,999 inhabitants; (3) 1,000 feet of those boundaries, for cities with 25,000 to 49,999 inhabitants; (4) one-quarter mile of those boundaries, for cities with 50,000 to 99,999 inhabitants; and (5) one-half mile of those boundaries, for cities with 100,000 or more inhabitants.

H.B. 1286 (**Guillen**) – **RV Parks**: would: (1) adopt certain construction safety standards applicable to certain privately owned and operated recreation vehicle parks or campgrounds on which sites for recreational vehicles, recreational park trailers, or other camping units are offered primarily for use by the public for overnight stays; and (2) prohibit a city from adopting a policy,

rule, ordinance, or order that regulates environmental health and sanitation, electrical distribution system safety, liquefied petroleum gas storage and dispensing safety, or fire protection, if the policy, rule, ordinance, or order imposes more stringent standards than those adopted in (1), above.

H.B. 1292 (Campos) – Homeless Showers: would provide that a city with a population of 500,000 or more shall: (1) provide homeless individuals residing in the municipality with access to mobile showers in a sufficient number to allow daily shower access by each person residing in the municipality and sufficient access to address the hygienic needs and prevention of hygienic-related illnesses in the municipality’s homeless population; and (2) use all available federal money, including money provided under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, that is available to implement (1), above.

H.B. 1307 (Toth) – Disannexation: would: (1) authorize registered voters in a certain area to petition a city for disannexation of the area; and (2) authorize registered voters in a certain area to petition for release of the area from a city’s extraterritorial jurisdiction.

H.B. 1348 (Stucky) – Regulation of Veterinarians: would provide a city may not adopt or enforce a regulation that: (1) regulates the practice of veterinary medicine; or (2) prohibits a veterinarian from performing a procedure on an animal that is not prohibited by other law.

Elections

H.B. 1269 (Cole) – Early Voting: would provide that: (1) the early voting ballot board shall verify and count provisional ballots not later than the 10th day after the date of an election; (2) the early voting ballot board shall determine whether to accept mail ballots not later than the 10th day after the date of an election; and (3) the presiding judge of the early voting ballot board shall deliver written notice of the reason for the rejection of a ballot to the voter at the residence address on the ballot application not later than the 10th day after the local canvass.

H.B. 1270 (Cole) – Voter Registration: would, among other things: (1) provide that the voter registrar shall appoint, as a regular deputy registrar, at least one election officer serving each polling place for early voting by personal appearance or on election day; (2) provide that a person who would be eligible to vote in an election but for the requirement to be a registered voter must be accepted during voting by personal appearance for voting the ballot for the precinct of the person’s residence as shown by the identification presented if the person: (a) submits a voter registration application that complies with state law to an election officer at the polling place; and (b) presents as proof of identification a form of photo identification that complies with state law and states the person’s current address, or another form of identification along with proof of residency that complies with state law; and (3) require persons voting under (2), above, to be processed separately at the polling place from persons who are voting under regular procedures.

H.B. 1272 (Cole) – Early Voting: would provide that the period for early voting by personal appearance would begin on the first business day after the last day a voter registration becomes effective.

H.B. 1273 (Cole) – Early Voting Hours: would, among other things, provide that: (1) the voter registrar’s office shall remain open for providing voter registration information during the hours that the main early voting polling place is open for voting; (2) the authority ordering an election, including city council, may order early voting by personal appearance at the main early voting polling place to be conducted: (a) on one or more Saturdays or Sundays during the early voting period; or (b) during an extended early voting period continuing for any number of consecutive days up to and including the day before election day; (3) the authority authorized to order extended early voting under (2), above, that orders the voting during an extended early voting period shall order personal appearance voting at the main early voting polling place to be conducted for at least 12 hours on any weekday or Saturday and for at least five hours on any Sunday of the extended early voting period; (4) the election order and the election notice must state the dates and hours that extended voting described in (2), above, is ordered to be conducted; (5) the early voting clerk shall post notice for each election stating the dates and hours that extended voting described in (2), above, is ordered to be conducted; (6) the authority authorized under (2), above, to order extended early voting may also order extended early voting to be conducted at any one or more of the temporary branch polling places; and (7) not later than the time of the local canvass, the early voting clerk shall deliver to the local canvassing authority a report of the total number of early voting votes cast during the period of early voting by personal appearance for each candidate or measure by election precinct.

H.B. 1299 (Noble) – Mail in Ballots: would provide that: (1) a voter, after marking a ballot voted by mail, must sign the certificate on the carrier envelope using ink on paper, and that an electronic signature or photocopied signature is not permitted; and (2) a person other than the voter who assists a voter by depositing the carrier envelope in the mail or with a common or contract carrier or who obtains the carrier envelope for that purpose must sign the envelope using ink on paper, and that an electronic signature or photocopied signature is not permitted.

H.B. 1306 (Paul) – Election Contracts: would, among other things, provide: (1) that the county election officer shall contract with the governing body of a political subdivision, including a city, situated wholly or partly in the county served by the officer to perform election services in any election ordered by an authority of the political subdivision; and (2) repeal the provision that provides that a county elections administrator is not required to enter into a contract to furnish election services for an election held on the first Saturday in May in an even-numbered year.

S.B. 396 (Hall) – Paper Ballots: would provide that: (1) the authority responsible for procuring election supplies (the city secretary) shall provide, unless the number of ballots provided to an election precinct is equal to the total number of registered voters in the precinct, the means to print additional paper ballots at each precinct polling place and early voting polling place; (2) an election officer shall provide a paper ballot to a voter who requests a paper ballot; and (3) the secretary of state may prescribe procedures to implement the provisions of (2), above.

S.B. 397 (Hall) – Voting Machines: would provide that immediately after closing the polls for voting on the last day of early voting by personal appearance, the presiding election judge or alternate election judge shall print the tape to show the number of votes cast for each candidate or ballot measure for each voting machine.

S.B. 398 (Hall) – Federal Elections: would, among other things, provide that: (1) a primary or general election for a federal office, other than the office of the president or vice president of the United States, or a resulting runoff election (a “federal election”) is a separate election from any other election in the state; (2) a federal election may not list on the federal ballot any proposition or election for state or county office; (3) to the extent feasible, a federal election and an election that is not a federal election shall be held separately and concurrently using the same precincts and polling locations; and (4) the secretary of state shall adopt rules to enact the provisions of (1)-(3), above, and the rules adopted must reduce voter disruption and confusion to the greatest extent possible, including rules requiring use of the same area in which voters are being accepted for voting and the same voting stations for state and federal elections. (Companion bill is **H.B. 294** by **Schofield**.)

Municipal Courts

S.B. 372 (Huffman) – Confidentiality of Non-Judicial Work Product: would: (1) create a criminal offense if a person other than a justice or a judge knowingly discloses, wholly or partly, the contents of any non-judicial work product to a person who is not a justice, judge, court staff attorney, court clerk, law clerk, employee of an agency of the Texas Judicial Council or Office of Court Administration, or other court staff routinely involved in crafting an opinion or decision for an adjudicatory proceeding; and (2) establish certain defenses to prosecution for violations.

S.B. 381 (Zaffirini) – Municipal Court Recordkeeping: would provide that a court officer who has been provided a computerized case and financial management system by the county must maintain the fee record for all costs charged for services rendered in a criminal action or proceeding in the county-provided system and provide the computerized fee record in hard-copy form to the person charged with the cost.

S.B. 460 (Zaffirini) – Extending Community Supervision: would, among other things, provide that: (1) in a misdemeanor case, a judge may only extend the period of community supervision if: (a) the defendant fails to pay a previously assessed restitution amount; and (b) extending the supervision period will increase the likelihood that the defendant will fully pay the restitution amount; (2) in a felony or misdemeanor case, a judge may only extend the period of community supervision based on the defendant’s failure to pay a previously assessed fine or cost, if after a hearing, the judge determines that the defendant has the financial resources to pay the fine or cost, and extending the supervision period will increase the likelihood that the defendant will fully pay the fine or cost; and (3) the total length of an extension of the period of community supervision for a misdemeanor under (2), above, may not exceed an additional two years beyond the applicable limit of three years.

Open Government

H.B. 1327 (Morales) – Dead Suspect Exception: would provide that the following information is not protected from disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act if the each person who is the alleged or suspected perpetrator of the crime being detected, investigated or prosecuted by law enforcement is deceased: (1) information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of a crime; and (2) an internal record or

notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution.

S.B. 435 (Middleton) – Family of Crime Victims: would, among other things, provide that: (1) a prosecutor may permit a person to view the following evidence of a crime that resulted in the death of a person and that occurred in the prosecutor’s jurisdiction: (a) a medical examiner’s report, if the person viewing the report is a family member (a person related to a victim of a crime within the first degree of consanguinity or affinity) of the person who is the subject of the report and the person who is the subject of the report was a victim of the crime; and (b) video evidence of the crime, if the person viewing the video is a victim of the crime or a family member of a victim of the crime; (2) a person permitted to view a medical examiner’s report or video evidence described under (1), above, may not duplicate, record, capture, or otherwise memorialize the information; (3) a prosecutor may require a person described in (2), above, to sign a confidentiality agreement before permitting the person to view the information; (4) permitted viewing of a medical examiner’s report or video evidence under (1), above, is not a voluntary disclosure of information under the Public Information Act; and (5) a governmental body, by providing information described under (1), above, that is confidential or otherwise excepted from public disclosure does not waive the confidentiality of the information for purposes of state or federal law or waive the right to assert exceptions to required disclosure of the information in the future.

Other Finance and Administration

H.B. 1247 (Cody Harris) – Food Regulation: would, among other things, provide: (1) the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), a county, a city, or a public health district, including an authorized agent or employee, that conducts an inspection as authorized under this section may not take disciplinary action against or otherwise penalize a food service establishment, retail food store, mobile food unit, roadside food vendor, or temporary food service establishment for failing to adhere to easily cleanable surface requirements for wall and ceiling surfaces, decorative items, or attachments in a consumer area, provided the surfaces, items, or attachments are kept clean; (2) a county or a city with a public health district that requires the payment of a fee for issuing or renewing certain permits for a premises permitted or licensed by the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission may not also charge a fee under the Alcoholic Beverage Code, for an alcoholic beverage permit or license issued for premises located in the county or city; and (3) DSHS, a county, a city, or a public health district may not require a food service establishment to obtain a sound regulation permit, charge a sound regulation fee to the establishment, or otherwise prohibit sound-related activity at the establishment if the establishment: (a) accepts delivery of supplies only for one hour or less between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. and delivery of food, water, or ice only after 11 p.m., provided the sound level from the deliveries does not exceed 75 dBA when measured from the residential property closest in proximity to the establishment, excluding traffic and other background noise that can be reasonably excluded; and (b) limits the use of amplified sound for playing music or amplifying human speech within the establishment’s indoor or outside property boundaries to ensure: (i) the amplified sound is not used after 10 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday and 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday; and (ii) the amplified sound level does not exceed 75 dBA when measured at the establishment’s outermost property perimeter, excluding traffic and other background noise that can be reasonably excluded.

H.B. 1303 (Geren) – Right-of-Way Rental Fees: would, for purposes of city right-of-way rental fees from cable and video providers: (1) clarify that “video service” means video programming services provided by a video service provider through wireline facilities located at least in part in the public right-of-way without regard to deliver technology, including Internet protocol technology; and (2) provide that the term “video service” does not include direct-to-home satellite services or any video programming accessed via a service that enables users to access content, information, electronic mail, or other services offered over the Internet, including streaming content.

H.B. 1336 (Darby) – Geothermal Energy: would provide that: (1) a landowner owns the geothermal energy and associated resources below the surface of the landowner’s land as real property; and (2) a landowner and the landowner’s lessee, heir, or assign is entitled to drill for and produce the geothermal energy and associated resources below the surface of the landowner’s land.

S.B. 377 (Perry) – Texas Connectivity Fund: would, among other things: (1) create the Texas Connectivity Fund; (2) provide that the broadband development account can include funds appropriated from the Texas Connectivity Fund; and (3) require the comptroller to deposit 50 percent of the proceeds from the collection of sales and use taxes imposed on telecommunications services to the credit of the Texas Connectivity Fund. (See **S.J.R. 27**, below.)

S.B. 431 (Middleton) – Child Custody Orders: would authorize a city or county to adopt an ordinance or order that imposes a civil penalty of not more than \$500 for engaging in interference of child custody. (Companion bill is **H.B. 969** by Cook.)

S.J.R. 27 (Perry) – Texas Connectivity Fund: would amend the Texas Constitution to: (1) create the Texas Connectivity Fund for the development of broadband and other telecommunications services in all areas of Texas; and (2) authorize the appropriation to that fund of a portion of revenue received from the existing state sales and use taxes on telecommunications services while not increasing the rate of the sales and use tax. (See **S.B. 377**, above.)

Personnel

H.B. 1242 (Hernandez) – Unemployment Benefits: would provide that an individual is not disqualified for unemployment benefits if the individual leaves the workplace to care for the individual’s minor child due to an unexpected illness, accident, or other unforeseeable event, but only if no reasonable, alternative care was available.

H.B. 1309 (Dutton) – Suits Against Governmental Employees: would provide that the plaintiff’s irrevocable election of remedies provision under the Tort Claims Act may not be construed to restrict a plaintiff’s ability to bring suit against an employee of a governmental unit for assault, battery, false imprisonment, or any other intentional tort, including a tort involving disciplinary action by school authorities.

H.B. 1332 (Herrero) – Jury Service: would amend current law to add an exemption from jury service for: (1) a firefighter, including a fire chief, who is a permanent, paid employee of the fire department of a city or county or of a special district or authority that provides firefighting services;

and (2) a police officer, including a police chief, who is a permanent, paid employee of the police department of a city or county.

H.B. 1339 (Harless) – Unemployment Benefits: would provide that service performed by an individual as a volunteer firefighter or paramedic for which the only remuneration for the service is compensation for not more than two 12-hour shifts each week, regardless of whether the individual is certified to perform that service by an appropriate entity, does not count for purposes of calculating unemployment compensation.

Utilities and Environment

H.B. 1312 (Vasut) – Municipal Utility Districts: would: (1) require a regular or special meeting of the board of a municipal utility district to be held at a publicly accessible location inside or not more than five miles outside the territory of the district; and (2) provide that (1), above, does not prohibit the board of a district from holding an open or closed meeting by telephone conference call or videoconference call in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

S.B. 382 (Zaffirini) – Drinking Water Report: would require the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to produce an annual report on public drinking water supply systems in Texas and deliver the report to the legislature not later than September 1 of each year. (Companion bill is **H.B. 582** by **Raymond**.)

S.B. 469 (Springer) – Water Infrastructure: would: (1) for purposes of the Texas Water Assistance Program and other funding initiatives by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), define “rural political subdivision” as: (a) a nonprofit water supply or sewer service corporation, district, or municipality that has a service area with a population of 10,000 or less no part of which is located in an urban area as defined by the United States Bureau of the Census or otherwise qualifies for funding from a federal agency; or (b) a county in which no urban area has a population of more than 50,000; and (2) provide that the TWDB may direct the comptroller to transfer amounts from the financial assistance account to the rural water assistance fund to provide financial assistance to rural political subdivisions for the purpose of providing low-interest loans for water or water-related projects.

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