

Regular Session, 2006

HOUSE BILL NO. 619

BY REPRESENTATIVE BURNS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: Requires the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness to develop an emergency alert system for all coastal and hurricane-prone parishes

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 29:726(E)(17) and (F), relative to the Governor's Office of  
3 Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness; to include within the authority and  
4 responsibilities of the office to develop a wireless communications system; to  
5 include within the system coordination between local and state responders; to include  
6 within the system certain components; to require the office to include staging areas  
7 for evacuees to be picked up; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 29:726(E)(17) and (F) are hereby amended and reenacted to read as  
10 follows:

11 §726. Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness;  
12 authority and responsibilities

13 \* \* \*

14 E. The office shall:

15 \* \* \*

16 (17)(a) By May 31, 2006, promulgate standards and regulations in  
17 accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act for local governments when a  
18 mandatory evacuation has been ordered for the evacuation of people located in high-  
19 risk areas utilizing all available modes of transportation, including but not limited to

1 school and municipal buses, government-owned vehicles, vehicles provided by  
2 volunteer agencies, trains, and ships in advance of the approach of the storm to  
3 public shelters located outside of the risk area with priority consideration being given  
4 to the special needs of the following classes of people:

5 (a) (i) The people with specific special needs such as the elderly and the  
6 infirm.

7 (b) (ii) Tourists.

8 (c) (iii) Those who refuse to leave.

9 (d) (iv) Those without transportation.

10 (b)(i) Be responsible for developing an emergency evacuation assistance  
11 program tailored specifically to accommodate people who lack transportation and  
12 the sick, disabled, and elderly.

13 (ii) Designate pre-established pick-up points where buses and ambulances  
14 would be dispatched to targeted areas to evacuate people who have pre-registered  
15 with the program according to zip code.

16 \* \* \*

17 F.(1) ~~The Military Department, state of Louisiana,~~ Governor's Office of  
18 Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness shall ascertain what means exist  
19 for rapid communications in times of disaster or emergencies, shall consider the  
20 desirability of supplementing these communications resources or of integrating them  
21 into a comprehensive state or state-federal telecommunication or other  
22 communications system or its several parts, shall evaluate the possibility of  
23 multipurpose use thereof for general state and local governmental purposes, and shall  
24 make recommendations to the governor as appropriate.

25 (2)(a) The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency  
26 Preparedness shall be responsible for developing a rapid communications system for  
27 times of disaster or emergencies, which system shall include an emergency alert  
28 system between all branches of state and local government and communication by  
29 state and local authorities directly to the media, citizens of the state, all branches of

1 law enforcement, emergency responders, and hospitals and nursing homes from a  
2 centralized Internet-based control center.

3 (b)(i) Components of the emergency alert system shall include tools for  
4 importing and exporting data from third-party databases and directories.

5 (ii) Components of the emergency alert system shall be able to support text  
6 messaging, e-mail, Internet access, cellular capability, desktop alert applications, and  
7 prerecorded voice messages and text pager messages.

8 (iii) The emergency alert system shall be compliant with emerging state of  
9 the art interoperability standards.

10 (c)(i) The rapid communication system shall have as a component, a website  
11 which provides emergency information to the citizens of the state including, but not  
12 limited to such things as information relative to the Department of Homeland  
13 Security and Emergency Preparedness, Federal Emergency Management Agency,  
14 charities and faith based groups that provide relief during times of emergency, and  
15 state and local shelters operating during a declared state of emergency; evacuation  
16 plans and routes; home safety including emergency kits, the supplying of food and  
17 water, pet care, and sheltering in place; and communications information.

18 (ii) A component of the website shall provide a message forum where people  
19 can post questions and messages before, during, and after the state of emergency.

20 (d) The rapid communication system shall have as a component a public  
21 alert system utilizing a siren system to be used as a public alert warning system at  
22 the time a mandatory evacuation is called during a declared state of emergency.

23 (e)(i) The rapid communication system shall have as a component an alert  
24 system to cellular phones which shall also provide information on evacuation routes  
25 and times.

26 (ii) The rapid communication system shall have a component utilizing the  
27 911 phone system in sending recorded messages to telephones in geographically  
28 specified areas which could also be used to enhance evacuations or to a pre-  
29 programmed list of contacts.

1           (iii) The office of emergency preparedness and homeland security shall  
2           develop an emergency information telephone bank to be staffed and controlled by  
3           the office to provide information before, during, and after the state of emergency.

4           (f) The rapid communication system shall have as a component the strategic  
5           placing of electronic billboards throughout each affected city capable of receiving  
6           real time signals prior to a storm making landfall.

7           Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
8           signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature  
9           by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
10          vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
11          effective on the day following such approval.

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DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument.

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Burns

HB No. 619

**Abstract:** Requires the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness to be responsible for developing a rapid communications system for times of disaster or emergencies for communication between state and local government and between state and local government and the citizenry of the state, requires the communications system to have certain specified components, and requires the office to provide for staging areas for evacuees.

Present law requires the Military Office to ascertain what means exist for rapid communications in times of disaster or emergencies and to consider the desirability of supplementing these communication resources or of integrating them into a comprehensive state system.

Proposed law requires the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness to be responsible for developing a rapid communications system for times of disaster or emergencies, which system is required to include the capability of communication between all branches of state and local government and wireless communication by state and local authorities directly to the media, citizens of the state, all branches of law enforcement, emergency responders, and hospitals and nursing homes from a centralized Internet-based control center.

Proposed law requires components of the wireless communication system to include tools for importing data from third-party databases and directories.

Proposed law requires that components of the wireless communication system shall be able to support text messaging, e-mail, Internet access, cellular capability, desktop alert applications, and prerecorded voice messages and text pager messages.

Proposed law requires the rapid communication system to have a website component to provide emergency information to the citizens of the state and a message board component.

Proposed law requires the rapid communication system to have a public alert system component utilizing a siren system to be used as a public alert warning at the time a mandatory evacuation is called during a declared state of emergency.

Proposed law requires the rapid communication system to have an alert system to cellular phones which would also provide information on evacuation routes and times and to utilize the 911 phone system in sending recorded messages to telephones in geographically specified areas which could also be used to enhance evacuations or to a pre-programmed list of contacts.

Proposed law requires the rapid communication system to have as a component the strategic placing of electronic billboards throughout each affected city capable of receiving real time signals prior to a storm making landfall.

Proposed law requires the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness to be responsible for developing an emergency evacuation assistance program tailored specifically to accommodate people who lack transportation and the sick, disabled, and elderly.

Proposed law requires the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness to designate pre-established pick-up points where buses and ambulances would be dispatched to targeted areas to evacuate people who have pre-registered with the program according to zip code.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 29:726(E)(17) and (F))