

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R16662 KSD-D

C.S.S.B. 1535
By: Zaffirini; Parker
Economic Development
3/18/2025
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) administers workforce training programs for high-demand industries, but current law does not establish a dedicated program for advanced nuclear energy workforce development. As Texas' nuclear energy sector expands, employers face shortages of skilled workers in key fields such as nuclear-grade welding, radiological monitoring, reactor operations, and nuclear engineering.

S.B. 1535 would direct TWC to create a workforce development program focused on advanced nuclear energy, including expanding training opportunities at technical and community colleges, fostering public-private partnerships, and supporting university research and leadership development. The program would also establish curriculum requirements for degree and certificate programs to align with industry needs and ensure a pipeline of trained professionals. By implementing this initiative, Texas can strengthen its nuclear workforce, support industry growth, and maintain high safety and regulatory standards, ensuring the state remains a leader in energy innovation.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 1535 amends current law relating to the establishment by the Texas Workforce Commission of an advanced nuclear energy workforce development program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Workforce Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 302.0081, Labor Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 302, Labor Code, by adding Section 302.0081, as follows:

Sec. 302.0081. ADVANCED NUCLEAR ENERGY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "coordinating board," "general academic teaching institution," "institution of higher education," "public junior college," "public technical institute," and "program."

(b) Requires the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), in collaboration with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and in consultation with representatives designated by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) to coordinate this state's nuclear energy strategies, by rule to establish and administer the advanced nuclear energy workforce development program (program) under this section for the purpose of addressing urgent skilled labor demands in the advanced nuclear energy industry in this state.

(c) Requires TWC, under the program, to:

(1) create a strategic plan for:

(A) addressing labor supply gaps and talent retention issues in the advanced nuclear energy industry; and

(B) providing financial assistance, including through the creation of strategic partnerships among public and private entities and advanced nuclear energy stakeholders to incentivize and support the creation by institutions of higher education and training programs in the field of advanced nuclear energy, and research leadership development in the field of advanced nuclear energy at general academic teaching institutions; and

(2) develop customized curriculum requirements for degree and certificate programs to prepare students for high-wage jobs in the advanced nuclear energy industry that, subject to THECB approval under Section 61.0512 (Board Approval of Academic Programs), Education Code, are authorized to be offered by an institution of higher education.

(d) Requires TWC, in developing curriculum requirements under Subsection (c)(2), to:

(1) consult with representatives of THECB, general academic teaching institutions, public technical institutes, and public junior colleges; the designated representatives of the PUC described by Subsection (b); and employers in the advanced nuclear energy industry; and

(2) focus on developing curricula for programs leading to high-wage jobs in certain areas.

(e) Requires TWC, not later than September 1 of each year, in consultation with THECB, to prepare and submit to each standing committee of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over workforce development, higher education, or energy industry matters, a report summarizing TWC's activities under the program. Authorizes the report to include TWC's recommendations for legislative or other action.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.