• The Texas Legislature traditionally appropriates funds to the University of Texas at Austin’s Bureau of Economic Geology (BEG).
BUREAU OF ECONOMIC GEOLOGY

- 250 employees (including students)
- Dr. Scott Tinker (Director)
  - UT personnel
  - 16 years as director
- Also the State Geological Survey
  - 106 year old designation
- BEG is a full research entity
  - not policy oriented, not regulatory
  - science only (i.e. – objective)
- Facilities in Austin, Houston and Midland
- Advisory Board includes RRC, TCEQ, WDB, GLO, CPA
HB 1 (as filed and adopted in the House) contained an exceptional item for the BEG

- Article III - Rider 13

- $2,471,800 for the TextNet Seismic Monitoring Program

- Rep. Myra Crownover (R-Denton) is the real author
• “Out of the funds appropriated to the University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology, $2,471,800 in General Revenue in fiscal year 2016 will be used for the purchase of seismic equipment, deployment, and maintenance of seismic networks, and personnel costs associated with the TexNet Seismic Monitoring Program.”
• No similar provision in Senate version of HB 1

• HB 1 and SB 2 have been approved by their respective committees and approved by both Chambers

• Anticipate conference committee members to be named shortly (as early as tomorrow)

• This issue will be decided in conference (late May)
TEXNET FUNDING PROPOSAL

• One time funding

  – 58 seismic monitoring machines
    • 22 “permanent” machines
    • 36 “portable machines”
      – To be deployed as necessary in groups of 12

  – Designed to compliment the 16 permanent seismometers that currently exist and are located across the state today
LIMITATIONS

• Money is for:
  – equipment and
  – installation costs only

• Nothing else
• HB 2932

  – Rep. Rafael Anchia

  – Relating to a study and report by the Bureau of Economic Geology on land shifting
Under current law, no state agency is statutorily charged with specifically studying earthquake activity in Texas.

Moreover, no agency is charged with making formal findings or recommendations to the legislature nor is any agency specifically charged with conducting a hazards assessment regarding earthquake activity.

This despite the fact that a series of earthquakes has occurred in the populous North Texas region over the course of the last few years.
• The purpose of the bill is three-fold:

  – identify earthquake activity in a formal report to the Legislature,
  – assess public safety issues related to earthquake activity, and
  – assess the equipment and monies needed to maintain an adequate network of seismic equipment in Texas
• Requires the BEG (in coordinate with and other qualified academic partners) to:
  – identify and report on earthquake activity in Texas of a certain magnitude by location,
  – approximate focal depths and epicenters,
  – identify any new or developing fault lines and
  – any causal factors that may have lead to the earthquake activity.

• The bill also requires a hazards assessment in coordination with the Division of Emergency Management and local emergency management personnel.

• Lastly, the bill require the to report to the Legislature the necessary equipment and related costs required to maintain a scientifically adequate seismic network.
• BEG estimates $1.5 million cost per year to conduct the study ($3M over the biennium)
  – To hire team of 6-7 geologists, hydrologists, seismologists, and engineers
  – Plus some software and machine maintenance costs

• Prefers to raise some of that money ($1M) privately

• Prefers the legislature to fund the rest ($2M)

• Otherwise, the bill is an unfunded mandate
Anticipate a public hearing in the House Committee on Energy Resources as early as next week or the week after
  – Anchia is a member of the committee

Note: The issue of a “study” can also be addressed in HB 1 (the budget bill)
  – HB 2932 does not have to pass as a stand alone
Thank You

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