
DIGEST

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HB 619 Original

2025 Regular Session

Knox

Abstract: Allows public camping and temporary outdoor habitation under certain circumstances.

Proposed law defines "department" and "public camping".

Proposed law provides that a political subdivision shall not authorize or otherwise allow any person to regularly engage in public camping on a public property, including but not limited to a public building or its grounds or a public right-of-way under the jurisdiction of the political subdivision.

Proposed law allows a political subdivision to, by majority vote of the political subdivision's governing body, designate property owned by the political subdivision or a municipality within the boundaries of the political subdivision to be used for a continuous period of no longer than one year for the purposes of public camping subject to the following conditions:

- (1) There are not sufficient open beds in homeless shelters in the political subdivision for the homeless population of the political subdivision.
- (2) The designated property is not contiguous with property designated for residential use by the political subdivision in the local government comprehensive plan and future land use map.
- (3) The designated property would not adversely and materially affect the property value or safety and security of other existing residential or commercial property in the political subdivision and would not negatively affect the safety of children.

Proposed law requires a political subdivision to seek a certification from the La. Dept. of Health (LDH) within 10 days of designating property for public camping.

Proposed law requires LDH, upon receipt of a political subdivision request to certify a designation, to notify the political subdivision of the date the request to certify was received and of any omission or error within 10 days after receipt.

Proposed law requires the LDH to certify the designation within 45 days after receipt of a complete submission from the political subdivision. Proposed law further provides that the designation shall be deemed certified on the 45th day if LDH takes no action.

Proposed law provides that if a political subdivision designates political subdivision or municipal property to be used for public camping, it shall establish and maintain minimum standards and

procedures related to the designated property for all of the following purposes:

- (1) Ensuring the safety and security of the designated property and the persons lodging or residing on the property.
- (2) Maintaining sanitation, including but not limited to providing access to clean and operable restrooms and running water.
- (3) Coordinating with federal, state, local, and private entities to provide access to behavioral health services, which shall include substance abuse and mental health treatment resources.
- (4) Prohibiting illegal substance use on the designated property and enforcing such prohibition.

Proposed law requires the political subdivision, within 30 days after the department certifies a designation, to publish the minimum standards and procedures on the political subdivision's website. Proposed law further requires the political subdivision and municipality to continue to make policies and procedures publicly available for as long as any political subdivision property remains designated for public camping.

Proposed law allows a resident of the political subdivision, an owner of a business located in the political subdivision, or the attorney general to bring a civil action in any court of competent jurisdiction against the political subdivision or applicable municipality for violation of proposed law.

Proposed law provides that an application for injunction filed pursuant to proposed law shall be accompanied by an affidavit attesting to all of the following:

- (1) The applicant has provided written notice of the alleged violation of proposed law to the governing authority of the political subdivision or applicable municipality.
- (2) The applicant has provided the political subdivision or applicable municipality with 10 business days to cure the alleged violation.
- (3) The political subdivision has failed to take all reasonable actions within the limits of its governmental authority to cure the alleged violation within 10 business days after receiving written notice of the alleged violation.

Proposed law provides that proposed law is applicable to a political subdivision during any time period when either of the following occurs:

- (1) The governor has declared a state of emergency in the political subdivision or another political subdivision immediately adjacent to the political subdivision and has suspended the provisions of this Section.
- (2) A state of emergency has been declared in the political subdivision.

Proposed law provides that LDH shall promulgate rules to establish minimum housing standards for emergency shelters, community facilities, group homes, and halfway houses.

Proposed law states that the minimum housing standards shall consider critical aspects such as safety, sanitation, privacy, and habitability.

Proposed law directs the state fire marshal to assist in the implementation proposed law by conducting inspections of emergency shelters, community facilities, group homes, and halfway houses to verify that the housing options available to individuals experiencing homelessness are safe and sanitary.

Proposed law directs LDH to seek waivers from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to obtain funding to provide healthcare and housing services to individuals who are suffering from severe illnesses.

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

(Adds R.S. 40:581.1-582)