



Date: April 25, 2023  
To: Chairman Guillen and the Members of the House Committee on Homeland Security & Public Safety  
CC: Rep. Jarvis D. Johnson, Rep. Rhetta Andrews Bowers, Rep. Terry Canales, Rep. Mark Dorazio, Rep. Vikki Goodwin, Rep. Sam Harless, Rep. Justin Holland, Rep. Ellen Troxclair  
*Via hand delivery and by email.*

**From: Adrian Shelley, Public Citizen, [ashelley@citizen.org](mailto:ashelley@citizen.org), 512-477-1155**

**Re: HB 1078 – disaster response – Public Citizen testimony in support**

Dear Chairman Guillen and Members of the Committee:

Public Citizen appreciates the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 1078, relating to establishment of the disaster identification system for a declared state of disaster. We support this bill because it will provide a means for emergency responders to locate victims in need of assistance during a disaster.

**This bill passed both chambers last session.**

This bill was nearly passed into law last session. It passed the House as HB 671 (87R) and the Senate as SB 328 (87R). It made it through conference committee and the conference committee report was adopted by the House. It ran out of time before the conference committee report could be adopted by the Senate. The new version of the bill is based on the conference committee report the House adopted. We hope and expect that it will pass and be signed into law this session.

Public Citizen has advocated for many years on behalf of communities and their needs during disasters. We have long supported additional methods for public notification and means for emergency responders to identify members of the public in need. We supported this legislation since its first introduction in 2019 (HB 91, 86R) and again in 2021 (HB 671/SB 328, 86R).

**Disaster response professionals support the use of these systems.**

In the Fall of 2017 after Hurricane Harvey, we participated in conversations about disaster and emergency response that included leadership from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Texas Department of Emergency Management. In the midst of the Hurricane Harvey response, TDEM Chief Nim Kidd implored Texans in need of assistance “to make sure you put a signal out there, that you are still there, and you still need help, convey that message to first responders.”

HB 1078 creates a standard system to convey that message: an illuminated display that uses a standard color scheme to communicate to first responders the needs of people and domestic animals. There are smartphone apps and other simple tools available for this purpose.



We ask you to support HB 1078 because it will provide first responders with another tool to reach people in need during a disaster.