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AB-1877 Office of Emergency Services: communications: notifications: translation. (2017-2018)

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Assembly Bill No. 1877

CHAPTER 630

An act to add Section 8594.16 to the Government Code, relating to emergency services.

[Approved by Governor September 21, 2018. Filed with Secretary of State September 21, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1877, Limón. Office of Emergency Services: communications: notifications: translation.

The California Emergency Services Act establishes the Office of Emergency Services within the Governor's office under the supervision of the Director of Emergency Services and makes the office responsible for the state's emergency and disaster response services for natural, technological, or manmade disasters and emergencies. Existing law requires the Governor to coordinate a State Emergency Plan, which is in effect in each political subdivision of the state, and requires the governing body of each political subdivision, as defined, to take actions necessary to carry out the provisions of that plan.

This bill would require the Office of Emergency Services to create a library of translated emergency notifications and a translation style guide, as specified, and would require designated alerting authorities, as defined, to consider using the library and translation style guide that may be used by designated alerting authorities when issuing emergency notifications to the public. The bill would authorize the office to require a city, county, or city and county to translate emergency notifications as a condition of approving its application to receive any voluntary grant funds with a nexus to emergency management performance.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 8594.16 is added to the Government Code, immediately following Section 8594.15, to read:

8594.16. (a) Translating emergency notifications into the most commonly spoken language other than English is a critically important governmental activity. In order for residents impacted by an emergency to be made aware of the emergency, it is critical that emergency notifications to the public be translated either into the most commonly spoken language other than English in the impacted county or counties, or, at the option of a county, into one or more commonly spoken languages other than English in the county based on an individualized language assessment of that county.

(b) The Office of Emergency Services shall create a library of translated emergency notifications that may be used by designated alerting authorities when issuing emergency notifications. The office shall consider the two most commonly spoken languages other than English in the state when creating the library.

(c) The Office of Emergency Services shall create a translation style guide that includes a glossary of translated standard abbreviations used in emergency notifications.

(d) Designated alerting authorities shall consider using the library and translation style guide developed pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) when issuing emergency notifications to the public.

(e) Designated alerting authorities may use a hyperlink to the translated emergency notification in a message disseminated through a wireless emergency alert for purposes of issuing a translated alert.

(f) Six months after the Office of Emergency Services launches the library and translation style guides pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c), the office may impose conditions upon a city's, county's, or city and county's application for any voluntary grant funds that have a nexus to emergency management performance that the office administers by requiring the designated alerting authority within a city, county, or city and county to translate emergency notifications.

(g) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Designated alerting authority" means a federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial jurisdiction that is authorized to alert the public of emergency situations through federal, state, and local laws.

(2) "Emergency notification" means any message authored by a designated alerting authority intended to alert or warn the public of an imminent threat to life safety or property damage, and that is disseminated through designated alert and warning systems such as the Emergency Alert System or the federal Wireless Emergency Alerts system.

(h) Nothing in this section shall delay or prohibit a designated alerting authority from issuing an emergency notification in a timely manner.