

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1421
By: Bonnen, Dennis
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note that current law generally prescribes certain groundwater conservation district export fees but note that the enabling legislation of certain districts provides for higher export fees, including certain groundwater conservation districts and subsidence districts in the Houston area which have fee caps based on the water rates charged by the City of Houston. The parties contend that other districts in the region that do not have these higher fee caps, such as the Coastal Plains Groundwater Conservation District, are at a competitive disadvantage to the districts that do have such caps. The parties assert that districts in the same region should have the same fee caps to ensure the districts are all on equal footing as the demand for new water supplies continues to grow. H.B. 1421 seeks to address this issue.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1421 amends the Special District Local Laws Code to change the fees the Coastal Plains Groundwater Conservation District may assess from fees for services or for water withdrawn from wells to production fees as authorized by Water Code provisions relating to a groundwater conservation district's authority to set fees. The bill authorizes the district to assess an export fee on groundwater exported from the district in an amount not to exceed 150 percent of the maximum wholesale water rate charged by the City of Houston and to assess other fees authorized by Water Code provisions generally governing groundwater conservation districts. The bill adds to the purposes for which the district may collect revenue the accomplishment of the district's regulatory goals.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.