

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 544
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Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties claim that many rural water utilities are intimidated by the regulatory hurdles involved in accessing funds from the rural water assistance fund. H.B. 544 seeks to address this issue by expanding the scope of the Texas Water Development Board's authority to contract for assistance in connection with the fund.

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. 544 amends the Water Code, for purposes of the Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB) authority to use money in the rural water assistance fund to contract for assistance to assist rural political subdivisions in obtaining and using financing from the fund, to expand the source of that financing to financing that is from any source for a purpose described by statutory provisions relating to the use of the fund. The bill adds planning assistance as such a type of assistance for which the TWDB may contract.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017.