

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2652
By: Larson
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that, despite often being hydrologically connected, surface water and groundwater have been traditionally managed independently of each other in Texas. As the demand for water and the need for new water supplies increases, understanding the hydrologic connection between surface water and groundwater will become integral to developing policies and strategies to effectively use and manage these two resources. C.S.H.B. 2652 seeks to address this issue by establishing an advisory board to study surface water and groundwater interaction.

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

C.S.H.B. 2652 establishes the 12-member Surface Water and Groundwater Interaction Advisory Board and sets out provisions relating to the board's composition and the board's chair. The bill requires the board to hold at least one public meeting in order to accept comments from the public on matters studied by the board. The bill requires the board, in consultation with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, groundwater conservation districts, and river authorities, to study the following:

- the extent to which surface water and groundwater interact in Texas;
- challenges arising in Texas from the interaction of surface water and groundwater; and
- approaches to mitigating challenges arising in Texas from the interaction of surface water and groundwater.

C.S.H.B. 2652 requires the board to deliver a report on its study determinations to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each member of the legislature not later than December 1, 2022, and to deliver related information on request to those recipients. The bill's provisions expire and the board is abolished January 1, 2023.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2652 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the

following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute increases the number of board members from nine to 12 by adding the following members:

- an additional person to represent the interests of river authorities;
- an additional person to represent the interests of groundwater conservation districts; and
- one person to represent environmental interests or the interests relating to the interaction of surface water and groundwater, recommended jointly by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and appointed jointly by the chairs of the house natural resources committee and the senate water and rural affairs committee.

The substitute changes who is responsible for recommending the members representing the interests of river authorities and representing the interests of groundwater conservation districts from just TCEQ to both TCEQ and the TWDB.

The substitute includes a provision requiring the board to hold at least one public meeting in order to accept comments from the public on matters studied by the board.