

SUBJECT: Changing the Rusk County groundwater district board election date

COMMITTEE: Natural Resources — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Larson, Phelan, Burns, Frank, Kacal, T. King, Lucio, Price, Workman

0 nays

1 absent — Nevárez

1 present not voting — Ashby

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Amanda Maloukis, Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: The Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District holds an election for its board of directors on the first Saturday in May of each even-numbered year.

DIGEST: HB 651 would change the election date for the Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District’s board of directors to the uniform election date in November (the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November) of each even-numbered year.

A director serving on the board before the effective date of this bill would serve until the director’s term expires. A director with a term set to expire in May 2018 or 2020 would continue to serve until the election of a successor in November of the corresponding year.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 651 would help more constituents vote in the Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District’s board election by requiring that it be

held on the uniform election date in November, on which turnout is typically higher than in May elections. More involvement by residents of Rusk County would benefit the area because decisions made by the groundwater district have a significant effect on economic development and water-related issues in the area.

The change in election date also would reduce costs by allowing the district to share facilities and voting materials with the county during a general election. Running a single election during even-numbered years would be a better use of the district's limited budget and taxpayer dollars.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.