

SUBJECT: Identifying and evaluating multiregional water supply projects

COMMITTEE: Natural Resources — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — T. King, Harris, Larson, Paul, Price, Ramos, Walle, Wilson

0 nays

3 absent — Bowers, Kacal, Lucio

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Dana Harris, Austin Chamber of Commerce; Jace Houston, San Jacinto River Authority; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council; Heather Harward, Texas Water Supply Partners)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jeff Walker, Texas Water Development Board)

BACKGROUND: Interested parties have suggested creating a planning process, separate from the current regional water planning process, to identify and evaluate long-range, visionary projects that would extend beyond the state's 50-year planning horizon and benefit multiple regions.

DIGEST: CSHB 3084 would require the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to submit a report to the Legislature by December 1, 2024, that:

- proposed a framework for the addition of a new state-level planning component to the existing regional water planning process that would identify and evaluate multiregional water supply projects; and
- contained a general outline for a potential work plan, timeline, and estimated cost for the implementation of the planning component.

"Multiregional water supply project" would mean a project that had the

potential to serve more than one regional water planning area and create greater yields of water at a lower unit cost due to economies of scale or provide strategic reserves for the state's long-term water needs.

TWDB, in developing the multiregional planning component, would have to consider:

- the current regional and state water plans;
- potentially available unused or new water sources, including sources related to flooding and seawater;
- potential multiregional water supply projects;
- the potential of such projects to provide water supplies beyond the 50-year state water planning horizon and address droughts worse than the drought of record; and
- other relevant factors as determined by TWDB.

In developing the report, TWDB could consult with the interregional planning council and contract for research and technical services.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021, and expire January 1, 2025.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would cost \$736,889 in general revenue related funds in fiscal 2022-23. These costs would be used by the Texas Water Development Board for additional FTEs and contracted services.