

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1762
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Natural Resources
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released an assessment report in February of 2007 regarding climate change. "Climate change" can be used interchangeably with "global warming" because the changes in temperature affect the weather patterns that people and the ecosystems have become accustomed to over time. According to the report, the first six months of 2006 were the warmest period on record for the United States, and five states, including Texas, experienced record warmth. Problems accompanying climate change include rising sea levels, melting polar ice, and an increase in the number and severity of floods, droughts, hurricanes, and storms.

Hurricanes draw their strength from the heat in surface ocean waters. During the 2005 hurricane season in the Atlantic Ocean, four Category 5 storms were recorded for the first time since record-keeping began. During the time when Hurricane Katrina was exploding from a tropical storm into a Category 5 hurricane, the Gulf of Mexico waters were unusually warm--about two degrees Fahrenheit warmer than usual for that time of year.

According to a Texas Tech University geoscientist, Texas can expect the state's winters, on average, to warm between two and five degrees Fahrenheit, and summers between four and 11 degrees by mid-century. As the temperature rises evaporation of water increases, including key water sources. In 2000, Texas and California alone accounted for 17 percent of the total surface water withdrawals in the United States. Texas' 2007 State Water Plan stated that it did not include the climate change in its report because "the effect on the state's water resources over the next 50 years is probably small enough that it is unnecessary to plan for it specifically.

As proposed, S.B. 1762 requires the Texas Water Development Board, with the help of an appointed advisory committee, to conduct a study on the impact of climate change on surface water. The bill also requires the board to submit a written report regarding its findings to the legislature.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to any state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. DEFINITION. Defines "board."

SECTION 2. STUDY. Requires the Texas Water Development Board (board), in consultation with the advisory committee established under Section 3 of this Act, to conduct a study regarding the possible impact of climate change on surface water supplies in this state. Requires the board, in conducting the study, to obtain any analysis conducted by a state located to the west of this state regarding the impact of climate change on surface water supplies in that state.

SECTION 3. ADVISORY COMMITTEE. Requires the board to appoint an advisory committee to assist in the study. Requires the advisory committee to include representatives of water authorities, industrial customers, agricultural interests, municipalities, fishing or recreational interests, and environmental advocacy organizations.

SECTION 4. REPORT. Requires the board, not later than December 31, 2008, to submit to the legislature a written report regarding the board's findings about the impact of climate change on surface water supplies. Sets forth the required information to be included in the report.

SECTION 5. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ABOLISHED; EXPIRATION OF ACT. Provides that the advisory committee is abolished and this Act expires January 1, 2009.

SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.