

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R22421 SLB-F

C.S.S.B. 991
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Agriculture, Water & Rural Affairs
4/14/2015
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The committee substitute to S.B. 991 is intended to study ways to use less water-intensive methods of powering desalination plants. Currently, fossil-fueled electricity production used to power desalination plants is very water-intensive, so we are using water to make water. Coupling desalination with certain renewable energy resources would allow for freshwater production with use of much less water.

C.S.S.B. 991 would require the General Land Office (GLO) and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to jointly conduct a study regarding the use of renewable energy (wind, solar, wave, and tidal power) to develop and desalinate brackish groundwater and seawater. Under the bill, GLO and TWDB may coordinate with a research division of a university in conducting a study.

These two agencies should appropriately complement one another in this study. According to the Environmental Defense Fund, GLO has already conducted similar research in the past. TWDB already maintains brackish groundwater databases.

Passage of C.S.S.B. 991 would be an important first step to understanding how low-water-use renewable energy can help alleviate some of the state's water pressure.

C.S.S.B. 991 requires the General Land Office to conduct a study regarding the use of wind or solar power to desalinate brackish groundwater.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS. Defines "development board" and "land office."

SECTION 2. STUDY. (a) Requires the General Land Office (GLO), in consultation with the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), to conduct a study regarding the use of wind and solar power to desalinate brackish groundwater on real property owned by the state.

(b) Authorizes GLO and TWDB to request data from any state agency in conducting the study. Requires an agency receiving a request under this subsection to provide the requested data.

(c) Authorizes GLO and TWDB to coordinate with a research division of a university in conducting the study.

SECTION 3. REPORT. (a) Requires GLO and TWDB, not later than December 31, 2016, to report the results of the study conducted under this Act to the governor and the legislature.

(b) Prohibits the report described by this section from disclosing information that is excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 (Availability of Public Information), Government Code.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.