

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1915
By: Alvarado
Texas Ports, Select
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Port of Houston is one of the world's busiest ports, with over \$265 billion dollars of economic impact statewide, responsible for nearly 1.2 million jobs throughout Texas.

S.B. 1915 seeks to mitigate the recent set of issues that have dominated the headlines regarding the Port of Houston Authority and the controversial one-way traffic policy.

The pilots have resorted to one way ship traffic to allow safe arrivals and departures of larger vessels, leading to a large cost in delays and lost cargo opportunities and a potential negative effect on growth in and along the Houston Ship Channel.

Currently, the commissioners of the Houston Port Authority, who are not licensed by the state, also serve a dual role and serve as the Harris County Board of Pilot Commissioners. This creates a conflict of interest as the state certified pilots are supposed to be the final arbiter of all safety and traffic decisions on the ship channel. This causes an inappropriate conflict of interest as the Houston Port Authority is also a market participants and have a financial interest in the traffic decisions that the Pilots make every day in the Houston Ship Channel.

S.B. 1915 amends current law relating to navigation districts.

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. Amends Section 5007.001, Special District Local Laws Code, to define "harbormaster" for purposes of this section.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 60, Water Code, by adding Section 60.005, as follows:

Sec. 60.005. WIDENING AND DEEPENING. Authorizes a navigation district to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for the purposes of widening and deepening navigable channels of the district.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 66.002, Transportation Code, to define "harbormaster" for purposes of this section.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2019.