

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 723
By: Larson
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that water availability models, which are computer simulations used to predict the amount of water that would be available in a river or stream under a specified set of conditions, are used in determining the existing surface water supplies for water user groups and specific projects and the potential surface water supplies for recommended projects and strategies. It has been suggested that because these models make predictions based on historic hydrologic trends and extremes it is important that, to avoid potential future water shortages, the models must remain current to accurately reflect the historic variability of droughts and floods, such as the new drought of record that occurred recently. C.S.H.B 723 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to obtain or develop updated water availability models for specified river basins.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B 723 amends the Water Code to require the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), not later than December 1, 2022, to obtain or develop updated water availability models for the Brazos River, Neches River, Red River, and Rio Grande river basins. The bill authorizes TCEQ to collect data from all jurisdictions that allocate the waters of the rivers, including jurisdictions outside Texas. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2023.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 723 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute does not include the Guadalupe, Nueces, San Antonio, and San Jacinto River basins among the river basins for which TCEQ is required to obtain or develop updated water availability models. The substitute includes the Neches River basin among those river basins.