

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
76R10805 MI-D

H.B. 2660
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Natural Resources
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Engrossed

DIGEST

Currently, Texas law requires the division of emergency management of the office of the governor to coordinate a state drought response plan. The number and severity of droughts in recent years may warrant the development of a plan that focuses on risk management, in addition to this plan, which focuses on drought crisis management. H.B. 2660 would amend the drought response plan to specify a state drought manager and make other organizational and procedural changes.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 2660 sets forth provisions regarding a drought response plan and a state drought manager.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 16.055, Water Code, as follows: (a) Provides that the coordinator of the division of emergency management of the office of the governor is the state drought manager. Provides that the state drought manager is responsible for managing and coordinating the drought response component of the state water plan.

(b) Provides that the drought preparedness council (council), rather than the response and monitoring committee, is created and shall meet as necessary to carry out the provisions of this section. Sets forth composition of the council, including the Texas Forest Service; the Texas Department of Transportation; the Texas Department of Economic Development; and the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts.

(c) Authorizes the governor to designate any other person or a representative of any other entity to serve on the council. Makes conforming changes.

(d) Requires the state drought manager, rather than the representative of the division of emergency management, to serve as chair of the council. Makes a conforming change.

(e) Requires the council to be responsible for reporting to the legislature, no later than January 15 of each odd-numbered year, regarding significant drought conditions in the state. Makes a conforming change.

(f) Requires the council to consider certain factors, in performing its duties under this section. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 16C, Water Code, by adding Section 16.0551, as follows:

Sec. 16.0551. STATE DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS PLAN. Requires the council to develop and implement a comprehensive state drought preparedness plan for mitigating the effects of drought in the state and to periodically update the plan. Requires the plan to be separate from the state water plan. Sets forth requirements for the plan. Requires the plan state drought manager to use existing resources to develop an information and communications network to forecast and inform interested parties and the public of the potential for drought, including programs and staff

of state agencies and other political subdivisions and of state institutions of higher education.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.

Effective date: upon passage.