

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 2230
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Natural Resources & Economic Development
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Desalination is the process of removing salt from brackish water. A byproduct of this process is a concentrated salty waste product known as brine. Brine from inland desalination operations is disposed of in injection wells. Class V underground injection wells are shallow wells permitted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for the injection of nonhazardous fluids underground. Class II underground injection wells are deep wells permitted by the Texas Railroad Commission for the disposal of waste from oil and gas exploration.

This bill authorizes TCEQ to use its Class V injection well authority to allow disposal of brine into Class II injection wells permitted by the Texas Railroad Commission. The result would be a decrease in the cost of inland desalination operations, thereby reducing demand on supplies of fresh groundwater.

H.B. 2230 amends current law relating to the authority of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to authorize an injection well used for oil and gas waste disposal to be used for the disposal of nonhazardous brine produced by a desalination operation or nonhazardous drinking water treatment residuals.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in SECTION 1 (Section 27.026, Water Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Railroad Commission of Texas in SECTION 1 (Section 27.026, Water Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 27, Water Code, by adding Section 27.026, as follows:

Sec. 27.026. DUAL AUTHORIZATION OF INJECTION WELLS TO INJECT NONHAZARDOUS BRINE FROM DESALINATION OPERATIONS OR NONHAZARDOUS DRINKING WATER TREATMENT RESIDUALS. (a) Authorizes the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to authorize by individual permit, by general permit, or by rule a Class V injection well for the injection of nonhazardous brine from a desalination operation or nonhazardous drinking water treatment residuals into a Class II injection well that is also permitted by the Railroad Commission of Texas (railroad commission) under Subchapter C (Oil and Gas Waste; Injection Wells).

(b) Requires TCEQ and the railroad commission to by rule enter or amend a memorandum of understanding to implement and administer this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.