

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1203
By: Cook, Robby
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The legislature has vested the responsibility for managing groundwater resources with the citizens who rely on those resources through locally-controlled groundwater conservation districts (districts). Current law requires districts to use the groundwater availability modeling information provided or approved by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). However, districts possess groundwater availability modeling (GAM) capabilities, population and water demand projections and other data that they use to model various management scenarios in order to make policy decisions regarding the future condition of the aquifer. In many cases local districts have better or additional information that more accurately depicts the conditions of the aquifer. Therefore, locally-elected or appointed board members should control the tools with which local policy decisions are made.

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. 1203 amends 36.1071, Water Code, by adding subsection (i) which adds language allowing districts to provide district data in addition to the use of TWDB GAMs and GAM input (eg. population and water demand projections) information. The bill also requires a district to provide TWDB any site-specific information they plan to use 60 days prior to adoption of the management plan. It also requires the executive administrator to provide comments to the district in a timely manner so that the comments are available for consideration at a public hearing. Additionally, it allows the district to revise the plan accordingly before it is adopted.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2003.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 1203 modifies the original bill by adding language requiring a district to provide TWDB any site-specific information they plan to use 60 days prior to adoption of the management plan. It also requires the executive administrator to provide comments to the district in a timely manner so that the comments are available for consideration at a public hearing. Additionally, it allows the district to revise the plan accordingly before it is adopted. The effect of C.S.H.B. 1203 is to have any site-specific information presented to TWDB before it is used and to allow TWDB to comment on the information before it is adopted as part of the district's management plan.