

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1370
By: Luna
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In the State Water Plan, many areas of Texas are projected to be in need of water in the next 50 years. Major advancements have been made over the past decade in desalination. Reverse osmosis and membrane filtration technologies have brought desalination to the table as a viable, drought-proof, and cost-competitive option.

H.B. 1370 will continue these advancements by charging the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) with furthering the feasibility research for ocean water desalination in Texas; developing a biennial progress report on the implementation activities along the gulf coast, including study results, evaluation of research and potential impediments to implementation, suggestions for roles the state should play in furthering ocean water desalination in Texas, and recommendations on future state funding; and pursuing federal monies to fund these projects.

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

H.B. 1370 makes certain legislative findings including: declaring that adding desalinated seawater to the limited water supply options currently available in Texas offers a new source which benefits Texans across the state; recognizing that major advancements over the past decade in reverse osmosis and membrane filtration technologies have brought desalination to the table as a viable, cost-competitive option; and emphasizing the need to continue the implementation and analysis of the numerous sites available to conduct this activity along Texas' shores.

The bill also instructs the TWDB to participate and undertake such options as research and studies to further the development of cost-effective use of desalinated water. The bill also directs the TWDB to submit a biennial progress report on the use of desalinated water in Texas including: (1) current study findings; (2) evaluation of research and identification of regulatory, technical and financial impediments; (3) suggestions on state participation to further develop seawater desalination for Texas; and (4) anticipated monies needed to continue the state's role with assistance and implementation of seawater desalination. Finally, the legislation directs the TWDB to seek federal sources for funding seawater desalination in Texas.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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