

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 79TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 23, 2005

TO: Honorable Kenneth Armbrister, Chair, Senate Committee on Natural Resources

FROM: John S. O'Brien, Deputy Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB2815 by Campbell (Relating to the Concho River Watermaster Program.), **As Engrossed**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would establish the Concho River Watermaster program, and it would provide that the South Texas Watermaster serve as the Concho River Watermaster. The Executive Director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) would appoint a member from the Concho River watershed to serve on the South Texas Watermaster Advisory Committee

The bill would establish the Concho River Watermaster Advisory Committee, also to be appointed by the Executive Director of the TCEQ.

The bill provides the means for a referendum to be conducted, on or after September 1, 2009 on the continuation of the program. If a Colorado River Basin Watermaster Program is established then the Concho River Watermaster Program will be discontinued. The bill also provides that fees would be assessed for the Concho River Watermaster Program and that they shall be of the same type and rate as those assessed under the South Texas Watermaster Program.

This estimate assumes that the bill would not result in a significant fiscal impact to the TCEQ because, under current law, TCEQ has authority to operate a watermaster program in the Concho River Watershed. In addition, Senate Bill 1, Senate Committee Substitute, Seventy-Ninth-Legislature, 2005, contains a contingency rider appropriating \$139,768 in fiscal year 2006 and \$110,548 in fiscal year 2007, as well as providing two additional FTEs, to administer the Concho River Watermaster's office. That appropriation is contingent upon fees being assessed on water rights holders in the Concho River watershed to cover the appropriation. Assuming the rider will be included in the General Appropriations Act for the 2006-07 Biennium, passage of the bill would not require additional appropriations to the TCEQ.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated. The bill's passage would likely result in increased costs to local governments in the Concho River watershed, since they would be required to pay fees for water rights to support the newly created office. This estimate assumes that these additional costs would be recovered through increased water rates.

Source Agencies: 582 Commission on Environmental Quality

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