

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1431
By: Alonzo
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

C.S.H.B. 1431 establishes the Sustainable Water Supply Research Center (Center), which would be housed at The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). The center's focus will be on the pressing issues of maintaining a viable water supply for the foreseeable future in Texas. The center's mission is to establish an internationally recognized leadership in research, education, and knowledge transfer in the area of sustainable water supply development and its effect on people, economy and the environment.

The climate and geography of Texas varies from water-rich lowlands in the southeast to desert high country in the west. The western regions also share a common border with Northern Mexico, which also faces water supply issues similar to Texas, and with the four states surrounding Texas. The center provides a platform for collaborative networks and partnerships, agencies, state governments, the public, and the engineering, industrial and scientific communities to gather and achieve water resource sustainability. The center will be headquartered in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and College of Engineering at The University of Texas at Arlington.

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

SECTION 1: Chapter 68 of the Education Code is amended by adding Subchapter B relating to the powers and duties of the board regarding the sustainable water supply research center at the University of Texas at Arlington. Defines "center." Provides that the board may establish and operate the Sustainable Water Supply Research Center as part of The University of Texas at Arlington. Provides that if established, the center shall conduct, sponsor or direct multidisciplinary research directed toward developing sustainable water supplies for Texas and mitigating the effect of diminishing water supplies on the economy and people of Texas. The center shall also conduct a comprehensive, interdisciplinary instructional program in sustainable water development at the graduate level and offer undergraduate courses for students interested in sustainable water development.

Provides that the organization, control and management of the center are vested in the board. Provides that the center may enter into an agreement or may cooperate with a public or private entity to perform the research functions of the center. Provides that the board may solicit, accept, and administer gifts and grants from any public or private source for the use and benefit of the center.

SECTION 2: Effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The Committee Substitute mandatory language, with permissive language by changing the word "shall" to "may" on page 1, line 11. The substitute also makes conforming changes to make the language permissive by adding the words "if established," on page 1, line 14. The substitute removes SECTION 2 of the original bill which requires the board of regents of The University of Texas System to establish the Sustainable Water Supply Research Center not later than September 1, 2008.