

BILL ANALYSIS

H.R. 942
By: Bonnen
Environmental Regulation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The San Bernard River is one of three rivers intersecting the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, which serves a vital role in linking ports along the entire Gulf Coast, serves as a major commercial transportation artery, and a means for inland-based fishing fleets to obtain outlets to Gulf waters. In 1929, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers modified the Brazos River Channel to enhance navigation in and around Freeport, which has been of detriment to the natural flow of the San Bernard River by changing the direction and pattern of its water movement and silt distribution. Since then, a Brazos River delta has formed causing altered Gulf currents to dump coastal sediment creating a sandbar and forcing the river to swerve from its original mouth. As a result, the river has become increasingly sluggish and the mouth almost completely clogged.

The adverse effects on the San Bernard River have created serious nautical hazards and increased flooding risks to the detriment of local residents and businesses. In 2002, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers published a report suggesting that the river closure could be reversed by periodic dredging, which would also produce renewable supplies of sand for beach replenishment.

H.R. 942 declares the Texas House of Representatives' support to restore the San Bernard River to its natural state by endorsing the suggestions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and pursuing funding efforts to take such actions.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this resolution does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

HR 942 states that the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas Legislature, endorsing the suggestions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, joins with local, state, and federal officials in supporting efforts and pursuing funding to open the mouth of the San Bernard River.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage.