

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 1762
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Natural Resources
4/21/2007
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released an assessment report in February of 2007 regarding climate change. "Climate change" can be used interchangeably with "global warming" because the changes in temperature affect the weather patterns that people and the ecosystems have become accustomed to over time. According to the report, the first six months of 2006 were the warmest period on record for the United States, and five states, including Texas, experienced record warmth. Problems accompanying climate change include rising sea levels, melting polar ice, and an increase in the number and severity of floods, droughts, hurricanes, and storms.

Hurricanes draw their strength from the heat in surface ocean waters. During the 2005 hurricane season in the Atlantic Ocean, four Category 5 storms were recorded for the first time since record-keeping began. During the time when Hurricane Katrina was exploding from a tropical storm into a Category 5 hurricane, the Gulf of Mexico waters were unusually warm--about two degrees Fahrenheit warmer than usual for that time of year.

According to a Texas Tech University geoscientist, Texas can expect the state's winters, on average, to warm between two and five degrees Fahrenheit, and summers between four and 11 degrees by mid-century. As the temperature rises evaporation of water increases, including key water sources. In 2000, Texas and California alone accounted for 17 percent of the total surface water withdrawals in the United States. Texas' 2007 State Water Plan stated that it did not include the climate change in its report because "the effect on the state's water resources over the next 50 years is probably small enough that it is unnecessary to plan for it specifically."

C.S.S.B. 1762 requires the Texas Water Development Board, in coordination with the Far West Texas Water Planning Group, to conduct a study on the impact of climate change on surface water. The bill also requires the board to submit a written report regarding its findings to the legislature.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to any state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. DEFINITION. Defines "board."

SECTION 2. STUDY. (a) Requires the Texas Water Development Board (board), in coordination with the Far West Regional Water Planning Group (planning group) established pursuant to Section 16.053 (Regional Water Plans), Water Code, to conduct a study regarding the possible impact of climate change on surface water supplies from the Rio Grande.

(b) Requires the board, in conducting the study, to convene a conference within the Far West Texas regional water planning area designated pursuant to Section 16.053, Water Code, to review certain analyses and recommendations.

(c) Provides that the conference should include, but not be limited to, the participation of representatives of the planning group, water authorities, industrial customers, agricultural

interests, municipalities, fishing or recreational interests, environmental advocacy organizations, and institutions of higher education.

SECTION 3. REPORT. Requires the board, not later than December 31, 2008, to submit to the legislature a written report regarding the study findings under Section 2 of this Act.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.