

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1630  
By: Wentworth  
State Affairs  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Under the Public Information Act, if a governmental entity subject to the Act receives a request for information that is available on the Internet, the governmental entity must locate, copy, and provide that information. This legislation would allow an entity subject to the Act to comply with the Act by informing the requestor that the information is available on the Internet, providing the location of the information, and offering the person access to a computer terminal at no charge to access the information.

Under current law, if a governmental entity is purchasing or selling real property, the information regarding the transaction is private until the project has formally begun. Completed property appraisals, however, are not exempt from disclosure during this time. Thus, other parties could have access to appraisal information during the negotiations, potentially hurting the bargaining position of the governmental entity.

S.B. 1630 expressly states that prior to the formal award of the contract, a completed property appraisal is not public information subject to the Act. S.B. 1630 amends current law relating to the availability of information under the public information law.

### **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**

S.B. 1630 amends Section 552.003(1), Government Code, to redefine "governmental body." S.B. 1630 amends Section 552.105, Government Code, to provide that information is excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 (Availability of Public Information) if it is information relating to the location of real or personal property for a public purpose prior to public announcement of the project; or appraisals or purchase price of real or personal property for a public purpose prior to the formal award of contracts for the property. Provides that Section 552.022 (Categories of Public Information; Examples) does not apply to information described by Subsection (a).

S.B. 1630 amends Section 552.221(b), Government Code, to provide that an officer for public information complies with Subsection (a) (relating to the requirement that an officer for public information of a governmental body promptly produce public information on application by any person to the officer) by informing the person requesting the information, in writing, that the public information is available on an Internet website that is owned, controlled, or maintained by the governmental body, and accessible to members of the general public; providing the person, in writing, the exact Internet location or uniform resource locator (URL) address where the person can access the public information; and offering the person access to a computer terminal at no charge so that the person can access the public information on the Internet website.

S.B. 1630 amends Section 552.228, Government Code, by adding Subsection (a-1), to provide that the policy of a governmental body under Subsection (a) is considered to be fulfilled if the governmental body complies with Section 552.221(b). Provides that if a person who is provided public information for inspection under Section 552.221(b)(1) (relating to the provision of providing public information for inspection or duplication in the offices of the governmental

body) or access to a computer terminal under Section 552.221(b)(3)(C) (relating to the requirement that a public officer offer a person access to a computer terminal at no charge under certain circumstances) to access public information on an Internet website subsequently requests copies of the public information, the provisions of Subchapter F (Charges for Providing Copies of Public Information) apply.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

Upon passage or September 1, 2009.

**EXPLANATION OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT**

Committee Amendment No. 1

S.B. 1630 is amended to state that under the definition of a governmental body, a nonprofit corporation that is organized for the purposes of a chamber of commerce and provides economic development services to a governmental body in a county of more than one million.