

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
81R10207 SMH-D

S.B. 1757  
By: Watson  
Natural Resources  
4/5/2009  
As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Pharmaceuticals are increasingly finding their way into our drinking water supply. Because of improved technology, chemists are able to identify compounds and metabolites in water, often at levels of parts-per-trillion, and are recognizing emerging contaminants. Currently, guidelines of some health care agencies and hospitals call for disposing of drugs by using the waste water system when they are no longer needed; this is also a common practice for individuals. Typical wastewater treatment does not completely destroy or remove these products, so they pass through treatment plants and into lakes or rivers that may be sources of drinking water downstream.

As proposed, S.B. 1757 requires the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to study and submit a report and recommendation to the legislature regarding the methods currently used in this state to safely handle and dispose of pharmaceuticals, medical sharps, and other potentially dangerous waste; alternative methods used for that purpose, including the methods used in other states; and the effects on public health and the environment of the various methods used for that purpose.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

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

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. (a) Requires the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to study the methods currently used in this state to safely handle and dispose of pharmaceuticals, medical sharps, and other potentially dangerous medical waste; alternative methods used for that purpose, including the methods used in other states; and the effects on public health and the environment of the various methods used for that purpose.

(b) Requires TCEQ, in conducting the study, to solicit input from pharmaceutical manufacturers; large pharmacies and small, independent pharmacies; health care providers, including home health care providers; hospitals; clinics; long-term facilities; entities that engage in medical waste processing and handling; solid waste management service providers; local governments; large and small ranchers and farmers; end users of medication; water utilities and other water suppliers; the United States Postal Service; the United States Environmental Protection Agency; and any other entity the TCEQ considers necessary.

(c) Requires TCEQ, not later than December 1, 2010, to submit a report of the results of the study to the legislature. Requires that the report include TCEQ's recommendations regarding the method for safely handling and disposing of pharmaceuticals, medical sharps, and other potentially dangerous medical waste.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.