

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 451
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Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Illegal dumping is a major environmental and public health issue that negatively impacts the quality of the surface waters of Texas. The nature of illegal dumping, however, makes it difficult for law enforcement agencies to combat this crime. H.B. 451 creates the Don't Mess with Texas Water program, administered by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, that will place signs on major highway water crossings that display a toll-free hotline to report illegal dumping. The program will be optional for local governments and will be a method for combating the rising incidence of illegal dumping in Texas.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 451 amends the Water Code to require the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), by rule, to establish a program to prevent illegal dumping that affects the surface waters of Texas by placing signs on major highway water crossings that notify drivers of a toll-free number to call to report illegal dumping. The bill requires TCEQ to establish a toll-free number hotline that will forward calls to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The bill authorizes a local government to work with TCEQ to participate in the program and authorizes a participating local government to contribute to the cost of operating the toll-free number hotline. The bill requires the Texas Department of Transportation to cooperate with TCEQ in the placement of the signs.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2011.