

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1339
By: Ritter
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties contend that the requirement of the boards of directors of certain water districts to meet in person to conduct meetings delays the response time of the boards when immediate action is required because many of these water districts cover large geographic areas. H.B. 1339 seeks to remedy this problem by authorizing a meeting of certain water districts to be held by telephone conference call or video conference call under certain conditions.

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

H.B. 1339 amends the Government Code to authorize a meeting of a water district whose territory includes land in three or more counties to be held by telephone conference call or video conference call only if the meeting is a special called meeting and immediate action is required and convening a quorum of the governing body of the applicable water district at one location is difficult or impossible.

H.B. 1339 requires a meeting held by telephone conference call to otherwise comply with the procedures in Texas open meetings law applicable to meetings of other governmental bodies held by telephone conference call. The bill makes a meeting held by video conference call subject to the notice requirements applicable to other meetings and requires such a meeting to be visible and audible to the public at the location specified in the notice of the meeting as the location of the meeting, to be recorded by audio and video, and to have two-way audio and video communications with each participant in the meeting during the entire meeting.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.