

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 293
By: Williams
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, water district boards are required to meet in person to conduct meetings. Since many water districts cover large geographic areas, in-person meetings delay the response time of the boards when immediate action is required. S.B. 293 will alleviate that problem by allowing water districts whose territory covers three or more counties to hold special called meetings via teleconference or videoconference.

As proposed, S.B. 293 amends current law relating to the authority of certain water districts to hold meetings by teleconference or videoconference.

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

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter F, Chapter 551, Government Code, by adding Section 551.131, as follows:

Sec. 551.131. WATER DISTRICTS. (a) Defines "water district" in this section.

(b) Provides that this section applies only to a water district whose territory includes land in three or more counties.

(c) Authorizes a meeting held by telephone conference call or video conference call authorized by this section to be held only if the meeting is a special called meeting and immediate action is required and the convening at one location of a quorum of the governing body of the applicable water district is difficult or impossible.

(d) Requires that a meeting held by telephone conference call otherwise comply with the procedures under Sections 551.125(c) (relating to telephone conference call notice requirements), (d) (relating to telephone conference call locations), (e) (relating to telephone conference call recording and sound), and (f) (relating to two-way communication during telephone conference calls).

(e) Provides that a meeting held by video conference call is subject to the notice requirements applicable to other meetings. Requires, in addition, that a meeting held by video conference call be visible and audible to the public at the location specified in the notice of the meeting as the location of the meeting, be recorded by audio and video, and have two-way audio and video communications with each participant in the meeting during the entire meeting.

SECTION 2. Provides for the effective date of this Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.