

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 916
By: Estes
Agriculture & Livestock
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The legislature established the 18-member Texas Bioenergy Policy Council and the 16-member Texas Bioenergy Research Committee for the purpose of developing a successful bioenergy industry in Texas. Both the research committee and the policy council are required to meet regularly at the call of the Texas commissioner of agriculture. Interested parties suggest that, given the size of these two bodies, there might be circumstances in which a quorum might more likely be in attendance if the quorum requirements were clarified and provided the option for members to attend council or committee meetings, as applicable, by telephone conference call, videoconference, or other similar telecommunication methods under specific circumstances. S.B. 916 seeks to establish these procedures.

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. 916 amends the Agriculture Code to establish that a quorum of the Texas Bioenergy Policy Council or of the Texas Bioenergy Research Committee consists of not less than half of the members of the policy council or of the research committee, as applicable. The bill authorizes a member who participates in a meeting of such a body by telephone conference call, videoconference, or other similar telecommunication method to be counted to establish a quorum of that body. The bill authorizes the policy council or research committee, as applicable, to hold an open or closed meeting by telephone conference call, videoconference, or other similar telecommunication method if notice is given for the meeting as for other meetings, the notice specifies a location for the meeting at which the public may attend, each part of the meeting that is required to be open to the public is audible to the public at the location specified in the meeting notice, and the meeting is recorded by electronic or other means and the recording of each portion of the meeting that is required to be open to the public is made available to the public. The bill authorizes a member of the policy council or the research committee, as applicable, to participate by telephone conference call, videoconference, or other similar telecommunication method in a policy council or research committee meeting, as applicable, at which other members are physically present and may vote.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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