

By: Márquez, Larson, Lucio III, Galindo

H.B. No. 1088

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Texas Technical Center for Innovative Desalination at The University of Texas at El Paso in partnership with The University of Texas at San Antonio.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 69, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter C to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER C. TEXAS TECHNICAL CENTER FOR INNOVATIVE

DESALINATION

Sec. 69.51. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "center" means the Texas Technical Center for Innovative Desalination established under this subchapter.

Sec. 69.52. ESTABLISHMENT. (a) The Texas Technical Center for Innovative Desalination is established as a joint partnership of The University of Texas at El Paso and The University of Texas at San Antonio.

(b) The organization, control, and management of the center are vested in the board. The University of Texas at El Paso shall administer the programs of the center.

(c) The center shall operate through The University of Texas at El Paso's College of Engineering and The University of Texas at San Antonio's College of Engineering. Participation in the center's activities shall be open to any faculty member of either university who is an active researcher in the field of water

1 desalination, engineering, hydrology, biology, water supply
2 development, energy efficiency, materials management, or another
3 relevant field as determined by the board.

4 Sec. 69.53. PURPOSE. The center is created to:

5 (1) promote interdisciplinary research, education,
6 and training for the development of state-of-the-art products,
7 materials, systems, and technologies designed for the desalination
8 of seawater from the Gulf of Mexico and brackish water within
9 surface and groundwater resources throughout the state;

10 (2) develop cost-effective, energy-efficient, and
11 environmentally sound water desalination, brine disposal, and
12 water conveyance technologies that can enhance the potential for
13 desalinated water to contribute toward the state's long-term water
14 portfolio; and

15 (3) develop and make available pertinent technical,
16 legal, and policy documents to advance the public's awareness about
17 the cost, usefulness, and applications of water desalination.

18 Sec. 69.54. POWERS AND DUTIES. The center shall:

19 (1) collaborate with appropriate international,
20 federal, state, and local agencies and private business or
21 nonprofit entities as necessary to develop innovative desalination
22 technologies;

23 (2) research and develop innovative seawater and
24 brackish water desalination technologies, including pretreatment
25 technologies and improvements, that:

26 (A) are cost effective and energy efficient;

27 (B) minimize environmental impacts; and

1 (C) offer long-term water supply solutions for
2 the state;

3 (3) research and develop innovative concentrate and
4 brine disposal methods and technologies that ensure responsible
5 environmental stewardship and create commercial markets for
6 by-products;

7 (4) research and develop water conveyance systems and
8 technologies that may be used to transport desalinated water to
9 target use populations;

10 (5) develop test facilities for evaluating the
11 performance of new products, materials, or techniques;

12 (6) develop specifications and standards for products
13 used for desalinating water, conveying water, and disposing of
14 concentrate or brine;

15 (7) provide public information, education, and
16 outreach regarding desalination technologies and appropriate uses
17 and conservation methods for desalinated water;

18 (8) provide data, recommendations, and any other
19 information necessary relating to desalination for local,
20 regional, or statewide water planning programs and processes;

21 (9) organize and host seminars and conferences
22 educating water utilities, educators, regulatory agencies, and
23 private entities on the center's work;

24 (10) research and develop brackish water systems that:

25 (A) are water and energy efficient; and

26 (B) could meet the demands of numerous small and
27 rural communities in the state; and

1 (11) advise state and federal agencies on the
2 inventory of the state's brackish water resources, including
3 brackish water resources located near the Texas-Mexico border.

4 Sec. 69.55. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES. The
5 University of Texas at El Paso and The University of Texas at San
6 Antonio shall encourage public, private, and nonprofit entities to
7 participate in or support the operation of the center and may enter
8 into an agreement with any public, private, or nonprofit entity for
9 that purpose. An agreement may allow the center to provide
10 information, services, or other assistance to an entity in exchange
11 for the entity's participation or support. The center shall
12 solicit active participation by researchers at other universities
13 and laboratories for the purposes of this subchapter.

14 Sec. 69.56. GIFTS AND GRANTS. The board shall solicit,
15 accept, and administer gifts and grants from any public or private
16 source, including local, state, and federal agencies, for the
17 purposes of this subchapter.

18 Sec. 69.57. PERSONNEL. The board may employ personnel for
19 the center as the board considers necessary.

20 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
21 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
22 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
23 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
24 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.