

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD**  
**Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 84TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**May 30, 2015**

**TO:** Honorable Dan Patrick, Lieutenant Governor, Senate  
 Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the House, House of Representatives

**FROM:** Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE:** SB523 by Birdwell (Relating to the sunset review of river authorities.), **Conference Committee Report**

**Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds** for SB523, Conference Committee Report: an impact of \$0 through the biennium ending August 31, 2017.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

**General Revenue-Related Funds, Five-Year Impact:**

Fiscal Year	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2016	\$0
2017	\$0
2018	\$0
2019	\$0
2020	\$0

**All Funds, Five-Year Impact:**

Fiscal Year	Probable (Cost) from <i>Appropriated Receipts</i> 666	Probable Revenue Gain from <i>Appropriated Receipts</i> 666	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2015
2016	(\$224,318)	\$224,318	2.0
2017	(\$23,257)	\$23,257	2.0
2018	(\$638,453)	\$638,453	4.0
2019	(\$69,772)	\$69,772	4.0
2020	(\$581,180)	\$581,180	5.0

## **Fiscal Analysis**

The bill makes 18 Texas river authorities subject to review by the Sunset Advisory Commission (Commission), but not abolishment, from fiscal years 2017 to 2023, and every 12 years thereafter. The bill establishes a schedule for reviewing all of the authorities over the next four biennia. The bill requires each river authority to pay the cost of the review as determined by the Commission, and requires the agency to review each authority's governance, management, operating structure, and compliance with legislative requirements.

The bill would authorize the State Auditor's Office (SAO) to perform an audit of the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) before December 1, 2016, and make recommendations to the Legislature. The bill would take effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all members elected to each house. If the bill does not receive the votes required to pass, the bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

## **Methodology**

The requirement for the Commission to conduct a limited review of river authorities on the schedule established by the bill would result in costs to the Commission of \$247,575 during the FY 2016-2017 biennium, and \$1,536,980 over the next five fiscal years. All of these costs would be reimbursed by the river authorities. Each river authority would continue to pay similar costs every 12 years for subsequent Sunset reviews as long as the bill is in effect.

According to the Commission, the review would cost approximately \$11,075 per analyst assigned to a team, per month. Estimated costs for each review assumes 90 percent of the time required to conduct the review would be needed in even-numbered fiscal years, as this is when the Commission's workload is more intensive, and that all travel would occur during even-numbered years. The analysis assumes river authority reviews are in addition to the Commission's body of work assigned for each of the next four biennia, and would result in the need for additional staff to conduct these reviews, including two additional full-time staff in the 2016-17 biennium. According to SAO, costs associated with performing an audit of LCRA would not be significant and could be absorbed within existing resources.

## **Local Government Impact**

There would be a cost to river authorities for reimbursing the Commission for their services. Costs to river authorities scheduled for evaluation in the 2016-17 biennium, including the Central Colorado River Authority, Palo Duro River Authority of Texas, Sulphur River Basin Authority and Upper Colorado River Authority are estimated to be \$61,893 per river authority. River authorities may also experience additional internal costs to comply with provisions of the bill.

**Source Agencies:** 116 Sunset Advisory Commission, 308 State Auditor's Office, LCR Lower Colorado River Authority

**LBB Staff:** UP, PM, SZ, JJ