

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 226  
By: Larson  
Natural Resources  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Interested parties note that competing local interests among the state's regional water planning groups may hinder the development of large scale water projects needed to serve rapidly growing areas in Texas. H.B. 226 seeks to address this issue by providing for an interregional planning council.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **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. 226 amends the Water Code to require the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), at an appropriate time in each five-year cycle for the adoption of a new state water plan, to appoint an interregional planning council that consists of one member of each regional water planning group to serve on the council until a new state water plan is adopted. The bill requires each regional water planning group to nominate one or more members for appointment to the council and requires the TWDB to consider the nominations in making appointments to the council and appoint the members of the initial council not later than September 1, 2018. The bill establishes the council's purposes as the improvement of coordination among the regional water planning groups, and between each regional water planning group and the TWDB, in meeting the goals of the state water planning process and the water needs of the state as a whole; the facilitation of dialogue regarding water management strategies that could affect multiple regional water planning areas; and the sharing of best practices regarding operation of the regional water planning process. The bill requires the council to hold at least one public meeting and prepare a report to the TWDB on the council's work.

H.B. 226 expands the required contents of a regional water planning group's regional water plan to include identification of unnecessary or counterproductive variations in specific drought response strategies, including outdoor watering restrictions, among user groups in the regional water planning area that may confuse the public or otherwise impede drought response efforts; if the regional water planning area has significant identified water needs, provision of a specific assessment of the potential for aquifer storage and recovery projects to meet those needs; the setting of one or more specific goals for gallons of water use per capita per day in each decade of the period covered by the plan for the municipal water user groups in the regional water planning area; and an assessment of the progress of the regional water planning area in encouraging cooperation between water user groups for the purpose of achieving economies of scale and

otherwise incentivizing strategies that benefit the entire region.

H.B. 226 includes as legislative recommendations a regional water planning group should make in conjunction with the submission of an adopted regional water plan to the TWDB recommendations for changes that the members of the planning group believe would improve the water planning process.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2017, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, December 1, 2017.