

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R2301 GRM-F

S.B. 239
By: Nelson
Business & Commerce
4/14/2019
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Government transparency and participation is the bedrock of American democracy. It's only fair that citizens have direct access to the institutions that have profound impacts on their lives and pocketbooks.

S.B. 239 will require open meetings of certain special districts with populations over 500 to be held within the boundaries of the district, or within 10 miles of the district if there is no suitable location in the district. S.B. 239 will ensure the regularly scheduled open meetings of the district are recorded at a reasonable quality and archived on the Internet for viewing by residents.

As proposed, S.B. 239 amends current law relating to the requirements for meetings of certain special districts.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 551.128(b-1), Government Code, to require a governing body of a special district subject to Chapter 51 (Water Control and Improvement Districts), 53 (Fresh Water Supply Districts), 54 (Municipal Utility Districts), or 55 Water Improvement Districts), Water Code, that has a population of 500 or more, to take certain actions relating to audio and video recording of meetings.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 49.062, Water Code, by amending Subsections (b) and (c) and adding Subsection (e), as follows:

(b) Creates an exception under Subsection (e) to the requirement that the board of directors (board) designate one or more places inside or outside the district for conducting the meetings of the board.

(c) Creates an exception under Subsection (e) to the requirement that the board designate a meeting place and hold meetings within the district, after at least 25 qualified electors are residing in a district, on written request of at least five of those electors, if the board determines that the meeting place used by the district deprives the residents of a reasonable opportunity to attend district meetings.

(e) Provides that this subsection applies to a district with a population of 500 or more. Requires the board to designate a place inside the district for conducting the meetings of the board. Authorizes the board to designate a place outside the district that is located not farther than 10 miles from the district's boundaries if the board is unable to designate a suitable meeting place inside the district.

SECTION 3. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2019.