

By: Guillen

H.B. No. 994

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the procedures for protests and appeals of certain ad valorem tax determinations.

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

SECTION 1. Section 41.45(b), Tax Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) A property owner initiating a protest is entitled to appear to offer evidence or argument. A property owner may offer evidence or argument by affidavit without personally appearing and may appear by telephone conference call to offer argument. A property owner who appears by telephone conference call must offer any evidence by affidavit. A property owner must submit an affidavit described by this subsection to the board hearing the protest before the board begins the hearing on the protest. On receipt of an affidavit, the board shall notify the chief appraiser. The chief appraiser ~~[may inspect the affidavit and]~~ is entitled to a copy of the affidavit on request. The board and the chief appraiser shall review the evidence or argument provided by the property owner before the hearing on the protest.

SECTION 2. Chapter 42, Tax Code, is amended by adding Subchapter B-1 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER B-1. APPEALS FROM APPRAISAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATIONS

IN CERTAIN COUNTIES

Sec. 42.35. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER. This subchapter

1 applies only to the appeal of an order issued by an appraisal review  
2 board that is located in a county:

- 3           (1) that has a population of less than 45,500;  
4           (2) that shares a border with a county that has a  
5 population of 1.5 million or more and is within 200 miles of an  
6 international border; and  
7           (3) through which the Atascosa River flows.

8           Sec. 42.36. APPEALS TO JUSTICE COURT. (a) As an  
9 alternative to bringing an appeal under Section 42.01(a)(1) to a  
10 district court as provided by Subchapter B, a property owner may  
11 bring the appeal to a justice court if:

- 12           (1) the appeal relates only to a determination of  
13 appraised value or eligibility for an exemption from taxation; and  
14           (2) the amount of taxes due on the portion of the  
15 taxable value of the property that is in dispute, calculated using  
16 the preceding year's tax rates, is \$5,000 or less.

17           (b) Venue of an action brought under Section 42.01(a)(1) in  
18 justice court is in any justice precinct in which the property that  
19 is the subject of the order being appealed is located.

20           (c) If the justice court determines that the justice court  
21 does not have jurisdiction of the appeal, the court shall dismiss  
22 the appeal. In that event, the property owner may appeal the order  
23 to a district court by filing a petition for review with the  
24 district court not later than the 30th day after the date of the  
25 dismissal.

26           (d) Sections 42.21, 42.23, 42.24, 42.25, and 42.26 apply to  
27 an appeal brought under Section 42.01(a)(1) to a justice court in

1 the same manner as those sections apply to an appeal brought under  
2 Section 42.01(a)(1) to a district court.

3 Sec. 42.37. REPRESENTATION IN JUSTICE COURT. In an appeal  
4 brought under Section 42.01(a)(1) to a justice court, an appraisal  
5 district may be, but is not required to be, represented by legal  
6 counsel.

7 Sec. 42.38. EXPIRATION OF SUBCHAPTER. This subchapter  
8 expires September 1, 2025.

9 SECTION 3. On the expiration of Subchapter B-1, Chapter 42,  
10 Tax Code, as added by this Act, the Office of Court Administration  
11 of the Texas Judicial System, using existing resources, shall  
12 conduct a study on that subchapter's effectiveness in increasing  
13 court efficiency and improving property owners' ability to exercise  
14 their appeal rights under Chapter 42, Tax Code. Not later than  
15 December 1, 2026, the office shall issue a report on the study to  
16 the appropriate standing committees of the house of representatives  
17 and the senate. The report must include the office's  
18 recommendation as to whether the legislature, in the next regular  
19 legislative session following the issuance of the report, should  
20 enact legislation similar to Subchapter B-1, Chapter 42, Tax Code,  
21 as added by this Act.

22 SECTION 4. An appeal under Subchapter B-1, Chapter 42, Tax  
23 Code, as added by this Act, that is pending on September 1, 2025, is  
24 governed by that subchapter as it existed on August 31, 2025, and  
25 that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

26 SECTION 5. The change in law made by this Act applies to the  
27 appeal of an order of an appraisal review board without regard to

1 whether the order was issued before the effective date of this Act.

2 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.