

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
87R8353 BRG-D

S.B. 632  
By: Buckingham  
Transportation  
3/16/2021  
As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

S.B. 632 allows the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) to help connect rural Texans to critically needed broadband services by authorizing LCRA to build broadband infrastructure and facilitate broadband connectivity on its electric transmission system.

Advanced telecommunications capability and Internet access are not services that LCRA currently provides. However, LCRA is uniquely situated to help improve access to broadband, especially in rural communities across Texas. LCRA could help connect rural Texans to broadband services by taking advantage of its existing and planned infrastructure to provide broadband connectivity.

Under this bill, LCRA will be able to repurpose its fiber optic transmission lines for the purpose of providing broadband services for contracted entities to connect to. LCRA will be providing the broadband highway, serving as the middle mile role to which retail providers will connect and serve as the last mile role in providing services to end customers.

S.B. 632 gives LCRA the authority to build broadband infrastructure and facilitate broadband connectivity on its transmission system. It also prohibits LCRA from providing broadband service to a retail customer or end user and clarifies in statute that LCRA will not be considered a telecommunications utility or Internet service provider.

As proposed, S.B. 632 amends current law relating to provision of broadband infrastructure and connectivity by the Lower Colorado River Authority.

### **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 Chapter 8503, Special District Local Laws Code, by adding Section 8503.032, as follows:

Sec. 8503.032. BROADBAND SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY. (a) Defines "broadband service."

(b) Authorizes the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) to construct infrastructure used to provide broadband service and to facilitate broadband service connectivity.

(c) Prohibits LCRA from providing broadband service to a retail customer.

(d) Provides that, notwithstanding any other law, Subtitle C (Telecommunications Utilities), Title 2 (Public Utility Regulatory Act), Utilities Code, does not apply to LCRA.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.