

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1540
By: Holland
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA), based in Montgomery County, provides raw and treated water to municipal water providers and industry, monitors water quality in the San Jacinto River basin, and operates the Lake Conroe Dam and permits structures on the lake. Following its review of SJRA, the Sunset Advisory Commission found SJRA to be generally well run, but recommended ways SJRA could strengthen its policies and procedures to ensure continued public engagement and management of various administrative practices in a fair and effective manner. H.B. 1540 seeks to provide for the next review of SJRA during the 2034-2035 sunset review cycle and implement these recommendations.

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. 1540 amends Chapter 426, Acts of the 45th Legislature, Regular Session, 1937, to set the next review of the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) under the Texas Sunset Act to be conducted during the 2034-2035 review cycle.

H.B. 1540 revises provisions governing SJRA to implement across-the-board Sunset Advisory Commission policy recommendations relating to the following:

- gubernatorial designation of the presiding officer of SJRA's board of directors;
- specific grounds for removal of a board member;
- board member training;
- separation of the board's policy-making responsibilities and the staff's management responsibilities;
- maintenance of complaint information; and
- public testimony at board meetings.

The bill provides for the transition to the new training requirements for current board members.

H.B. 1540 adds an additional member to SJRA's board of directors, decreases the length of a member's term from six years to four years, and provides for the transition to this new membership and term length.

H.B. 1540 requires SJRA's board of directors to develop and implement a comprehensive policy that provides a structure for public engagement in advance of major actions and projects. The

policy must include a clear and detailed description of how SJRA will seek to actively engage stakeholders, including the possible use of the following:

- advisory committees;
- community panels;
- town hall meetings;
- surveys; and
- other strategies on a recurring basis.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.