

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 5016  
By: Kitman  
Natural Resources  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

In the context of water infrastructure and water supply, technical assistance involves the provision of financial, managerial, regulatory, engineering, and operational support to small, rural, and disadvantaged communities with significant water and wastewater system problems. In practical terms, technical assistance providers serve as essential "boots on the ground," working closely with communities to identify the problems with their systems, develop solutions, and help these communities access state financial assistance for fixing their systems. While technical assistance is widely recognized as an effective way to assist communities that lack the professional or financial resources to fix their failing or at-risk water and wastewater systems, there are only a limited number of organizations providing technical assistance in Texas. Expanding the state's technical assistance provider capacity would enlarge the opportunity for more small, rural, and disadvantaged communities to participate in the state's water financial assistance programs, including the state revolving fund and other funds administered by the Texas Water Development Board.

H.B. 5016 seeks to address this issue by creating the Water Technical Assistance Consortium to assess and make recommendations for the development and expansion of Texas' technical assistance provider capacity, with an emphasis on providing technical assistance to small, rural, and disadvantaged communities. The consortium is also intended to help focus and coordinate state, private, and philanthropic efforts towards expanding the state's technical assistance resources essential to assisting communities in accessing state financial assistance programs.

### **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. 5016 amends the Water Code to require the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to establish and administer the Water Technical Assistance Consortium to meet at least once a year do the following:

- assess ongoing efforts to develop and expand the provision of technical assistance regarding water infrastructure and water supply in the state; and
- make recommendations to the TWDB to facilitate the development and expansion of the state's water technical assistance capacity with an emphasis on the provision of water technical assistance regarding water infrastructure and water supply to small, rural, or disadvantaged communities.

The bill establishes the composition of the consortium as representatives from each of the following:

- the TWDB;
- the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;
- the U.S. Department of Agriculture;
- the Texas Rural Water Association;
- counties, including at least one representative from a county with a population of 100,000 or less;
- providers of technical assistance; and
- corporate and philanthropic interests.

The bill establishes that the consortium is subject to review under the Texas Sunset Act in the same manner and at the same time as the TWDB.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.