

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
88R4623 SGM-F

S.B. 712  
By: Kolkhorst  
Natural Resources & Economic Development  
3/24/2023  
As Filed

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

The 60th Texas Legislature authorized the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to create a centralized data bank for all hydrologic data collected in this state. Later, the legislature expanded this effort by establishing Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS) as a centralized information system incorporating all Texas natural resource data, socioeconomic data related to natural resources, or indexes related to that data that is collected by state agencies or other entities.

Today, natural resource information is only a fraction of the data created and hosted by TNRIS, and the program's name is no longer an accurate descriptor. TNRIS serves as a centralized clearinghouse for natural resource, census, emergency management, and other socioeconomic data; provides high quality historic and current geospatial data products; offers education and training; and works to advance the GIS community in Texas through collaboration, expertise, and cost-sharing initiatives. In 2011, the 82nd Texas Legislature recognized the TNRIS director as the Geographic Information Officer of Texas. Rebranding TNRIS as the "Texas Geographic Information Office" would better align with the director's official title and better encompass the variety of work carried out by the program.

Without this item, TNRIS may miss out on opportunities to attract more data collection partnerships, inquiries regarding the availability of geographic information, and recognition as the office for state agencies and the public to contact for assistance when working with geographic data. According to the National States Geographic Information Council, a state geographic information office reduces duplication, ensures access to geographic data, publishes standards/best practices, and improves efficiencies in delivery of government services. More than half of U.S. states have a geographic information office.

A similar request to rename the TNRIS program was included as a major issue in the TWDB's Sunset Self-Evaluation Report.

S.B. 712 would update the name of the Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS) to the "Texas Geographic Information Office (TxGIO)."

S.B. 712 amends Sections 16.017, 16.021, and 16.023 of the Texas Water Code.

As proposed, S.B. 712 amends current law relating to renaming the Texas Natural Resources Information System as the Texas Geographic Information Office and the duties of certain officers of that entity.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Water Development Board is modified in SECTION 3 (Section 16.021, Water Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 16.017(b), Water Code, as follows:

(b) Requires the executive administrator of the Texas Water Development Board to operate as part of the Texas Geographic Information Office, rather than the Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS), a strategic mapping program to acquire, store, and distribute digital, geospatial information.

SECTION 2. Amends the heading to Section 16.021, Water Code, to read as follows:

Sec. 16.021. TEXAS GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OFFICE.

SECTION 3. Amends Sections 16.021(a), (b), (c), and (e), Water Code, as follows:

(a) Makes a conforming change to this subsection.

(b) Makes conforming changes to this subsection.

(c) Requires the executive administrator to designate the deputy executive administrator of the Texas Geographic Information Office, rather than the director of TNRIS, to serve as the state geographic information officer.

(e) Makes a conforming change to this subsection.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 16.023(b), Water Code, to make a conforming change.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2023.