

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R1716 SGM-D

S.B. 917
By: Hall
Local Government
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Chapter 49 of the Water Code sets out meeting requirements for the boards of special purpose districts. Currently, the board of a "rural area district," as defined by Section 49.062(b-1), shall conduct a meeting at a location inside the district or within 10 miles of its boundaries. In a non-rural district of at least 50 qualified electors, on the written request of at least five electors, the board shall designate a meeting place within the district or, if no suitable place exists, at a location not further than 10 miles from its boundaries. If the board fails to comply, electors may petition the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to designate a location. However, many residents of special districts are unaware of their right to petition for a change of site. Reports of boards of municipal utility districts designating meeting places far outside their districts have prompted a reconsideration of the current process and the imposition of a requirement that meetings be held no farther than 5 miles from a district's boundaries.

This bill specifies a meeting of the board of a municipal utility district must be held at a publicly accessible location inside or not more than five miles outside the territory of the district. Does not prohibit the board of a district from holding an open or closed meeting by telephone conference call or video conference.

As proposed, S.B. 917 amends current law relating to meetings of the board of directors of a municipal utility district.

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 Subchapter C, Chapter 54, Water Code, by adding Section 54.104, as follows:

Sec. 54.104. MEETINGS. (a) Requires that a regular or special meeting of the board of a district be held at a publicly accessible location inside or not more than five miles outside the territory of the district.

(b) Provides that this section does not prohibit the board of a district from holding an open or closed meeting by telephone conference call or videoconference call in accordance with Chapter 551 (Open Meetings), Government Code.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2023.