

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 27
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Disaster Preparedness & Flooding, Select
9/2/2025
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

There are proposed large-volume groundwater production and export projects in the Neches and Trinity Valleys Groundwater Conservation District (district) that could have substantial impacts on the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer, one of the region's key underground water sources, on other aquifers in the area, and on hydrologically connected surface water resources. However, the current available science to assess the anticipated hydrological effects of such large-volume projects is limited.

Accordingly, H.B. 27 requires the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to conduct a study assessing certain hydrological effects of groundwater pumping in the aquifers underlying the district and to compare anticipated effects under various pumping scenarios, as well as to prepare a report on the results of the study. The bill places a temporary moratorium on the district's issuance of new permits or permit amendments for producing and transferring groundwater out of the district for a period starting on the bill's effective date and lasting until after the 270th day after the deadline for TWDB's submission of the report, so that better science can be developed, understood, and available to support such important decisions impacting the region's water resources.

H.B. 27 amends current law relating to a groundwater study of certain aquifers underlying the territory of the Neches and Trinity Valleys Groundwater Conservation District by the Texas Water Development Board before the issuance of permits or permit amendments by the 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 8863, Special District Local Laws Code, by adding Section 8863.106, as follows:

Sec. 8863.106. STUDY; PERMIT MORATORIUM. (a) Requires the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to conduct a study to:

- (1) analyze the annual maximum amount of groundwater that can be produced in perpetuity in the Neches and Trinity Valleys Groundwater Conservation district (district) from the aquifers underlying the district's territory without impeding the achievement of the desired future conditions adopted for those aquifers that are applicable to the territory of the district;
- (2) compare the results of the analyses conducted under Subdivision (1) to the amount of modeled available groundwater determined by the executive administrator of TWDB before September 1, 2025, for each aquifer; and
- (3) assess the hydrological effects in the district of proposed groundwater production in the district as represented in the applicable desired future

conditions, and of transfers of produced groundwater to areas outside of the district proposed in any pending applications for a permit or permit amendment from the district, and compare those effects with the hydrological effects that would be expected if groundwater production in the district were limited annually to the amount that could be produced in perpetuity as determined under Subdivision (1).

(b) Requires that the hydrological effects assessed under Subsection (a)(3) include effects on average annual recharge, inflows, discharges, spring flows, capture, and interaction between groundwater and surface water in the district.

(c) Requires TWDB, not later than January 12, 2027, to prepare and submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each standing legislative committee with primary jurisdiction over groundwater a report on the results of the study conducted under this section.

(d) Prohibits the district from issuing a new permit or permit amendment to an applicant for the production and transfer out of the district of groundwater until after the 270th day after the deadline for the submission of the report required by Subsection (c).

(e) Provides that this section expires November 1, 2027.

SECTION 2. Provides that Section 8863.106(d), Special District Local Laws Code, as added by this Act, does not apply to a permit or a permit amendment issued by the district before the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or the 91st day after the last day of the legislative session.