

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 103
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Local Government
5/21/2025
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The bill author has informed the committee that, while public interest in the accountability regarding local tax and bond measures is growing, there is currently no centralized system or database for taxpayers to track current and historical information regarding taxes imposed and bonds issued by taxing units in the state. The bill author has also informed the committee of the struggles that Texans often face in trying to understand the full extent of their tax obligations, particularly when multiple political subdivisions, such as school districts, cities, and counties, levy taxes simultaneously. Additionally, the bill author has informed the committee that voters can often find it difficult to assess how past tax-rate and bond elections have impacted current tax rates, debt accumulation, and the progress of bond-funded projects. H.B. 103 seeks to empower taxpayers with critical information relating to their financial obligations to local governments and increase transparency in the state by requiring the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas, in coordination with the Bond Review Board, to develop and maintain a publicly accessible and free online database that includes current and historical information regarding taxes imposed and bonds issued by each taxing unit in Texas.

H.B. 103 amends current law relating to the creation and maintenance of a database of taxing unit bond, tax, and bond-related project information and provides a civil penalty.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas in SECTION 1 (Section 403.705, Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 403, Government Code, by adding Subchapter V, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER V. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOND, TAX, AND PROJECT DATABASE

Sec. 403.701. DEFINITIONS. Defines "tax year," "taxing unit," and "voter-approval tax rate."

Sec. 403.702. BOND, TAX, AND PROJECT DATABASE. (a) Requires the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas (comptroller) to consult and coordinate with the Bond Review Board to develop and maintain a database of current and historical information regarding taxes imposed and bonds issued by each taxing unit in this state.

(b) Requires that the database include:

- (1) for each bond proposed or issued by a taxing unit, certain information;
- (2) the language of the ballot proposition and the result of any tax rate election held under Chapter 26 (Assessment), Tax Code, including certain metrics;
- (3) for maintenance taxes levied or proposed by a school district, the school district's proposed or approved tax rate and the language of the

ballot proposition under Section 45.003(d) (relating to requiring that a proposition submitted to authorize the levy of maintenance taxes include certain language), Education Code;

(4) a report generation function that allows the comptroller to generate a report of the information described by Subdivisions (1) through (3) for each taxing unit, disaggregated by geographic area within the taxing unit; and

(5) a function that allows for the proposal of updates or corrections to the information contained in the database.

(c) Requires a taxing unit, for the purpose of Subsection (b)(1), to provide to the comptroller data for each proposed bond independent of any other proposed bond, bond refinancing, or ad valorem tax rate change.

(d) Requires a taxing unit, by August 7 or as soon as thereafter as practicable, to provide to the comptroller the information described by Subsections (b)(1) through (3) for the current tax year and any other information requested by the comptroller for the purpose of maintaining the database.

(d-1) Requires a taxing unit, not later than January 1, 2026, to provide to the comptroller all available current and historical information described by Subsections (b)(1) through (3) for the 2015 through 2025 tax years. Provides that this subsection expires January 31, 2026.

Sec. 403.703. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DATABASE. Provides that the comptroller is:

(1) authorized to consult with the appropriate officer of, or other person representing, a taxing unit to obtain the information necessary to operate and maintain the database established under this subchapter;

(2) authorized to contract with a third party for the development or maintenance of the database;

(3) required to coordinate with the Department of Information Resources to include a separate link to the database on the Internet website "Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes"; and

(4) prohibited from charging a fee to the public for access to the database.

Sec. 403.704. NONCOMPLIANCE; CIVIL PENALTY. (a) Requires the comptroller, if a taxing unit does not provide information to the comptroller as required by this subchapter, to send written notice to the taxing unit describing the information the taxing unit is required to provide to the comptroller and informing the taxing unit that the taxing unit is liable for a civil penalty in the amount provided by this section if the taxing unit does not provide the required information on or before the 30th day after the date the comptroller sends the written notice.

(b) Provides that, if a taxing unit does not provide the required information as prescribed by Subsection (a), the taxing unit is liable to the state for a civil penalty of \$1,000.

(c) Authorizes the attorney general to bring an action to recover the civil penalty imposed under this section.

(d) Provides that it is a defense to an action brought under this section that a taxing unit provided the required information or documents to the extent the

information or documents are not exempt from disclosure or confidential under Chapter 552 (Public Information).

Sec. 403.705. RULEMAKING. Authorizes the comptroller to establish procedures and adopt rules necessary to implement this subchapter.

SECTION 2. Requires the comptroller to create the database required by Subchapter V, Chapter 403 (Comptroller of Public Accounts), Government Code, as added by this Act, and the Department of Information Resources to create a link to the database on its Internet website as soon as practicable after January 1, 2026.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2025.