

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 638
By: Tepper
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that while current law requires the governing bodies of certain school districts, home-rule municipalities, and counties to make a video and audio recording of certain meetings and make available an archived copy of the recording on the Internet, this requirement does not apply to water districts. C.S.H.B. 638 seeks to address this issue by making the requirement applicable to certain districts all or part of which are located in a county with a population of 125,000 or more and requiring an audio recording in those districts no part of which are located in such a county.

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

C.S.H.B. 638 amends the Government Code to include a district, all or part of which is located in a county with a population of 125,000 or more, that is a groundwater conservation district, navigation district, or certain water district among the governmental bodies that are required to make a video and audio recording of reasonable quality of each regularly scheduled open meeting that is not a work session or a special called meeting and to make available an archived copy of the recording on the Internet. The bill requires those districts, no part of which are located in such a county, to make an audio recording of reasonable quality of each regularly scheduled open meeting that is not a work session or a special called meeting and to make available an archived copy of the recording on the Internet in the manner prescribed for such governmental bodies.

C.S.H.B. 638 applies only to an open meeting held on or after the bill's effective date. An open meeting that is held before the bill's effective date is governed by the law in effect on the date of the open meeting, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 638 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

Whereas the introduced included a district that is a groundwater conservation district, navigation district, or certain water district among the governmental bodies that are required to make a video and audio recording of reasonable quality of each regularly scheduled open meeting that is not a work session or a special called meeting and to make available an archived copy of the recording on the Internet, the substitute does the following:

- restricts those included districts to districts all or part of which are located in a county with a population of 125,000 or more; and
- requires those districts, no part of which are located in such a county, to make an audio recording of reasonable quality of each regularly scheduled open meeting that is not a work session or a special called meeting and to make available an archived copy of the recording on the Internet in the manner prescribed for such governmental bodies.