

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1238
By: Guillen
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The process for acquiring state approval for the drilling of an injection well can sometimes be lengthy due to the complexity and volume of wells requiring inspection, which may lead to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) being overburdened with inspections. Under current law, the executive director of the TCEQ is required to have an inspection made of the location of the proposed disposal well to determine the local conditions and the probable effect of the well, which could cause delays in the process of establishing a well due to limited availability of approved inspectors. H.B. 1238 seeks to address this issue by authorizing the executive director of TCEQ to satisfy the inspection requirements for a proposed Class I injection well by accepting an inspection report prepared by an engineer or geoscientist licensed in Texas.

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

H.B. 1238 amends the Water Code to authorize the executive director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to satisfy the inspection requirements for a proposed Class I injection well by accepting an inspection report prepared by an engineer or geoscientist licensed in Texas. The bill sets out the following with respect to such a report:

- a requirement that the report confirm that the engineer or geoscientist inspected the location of the proposed injection well to determine the local conditions and the probable effect of the well;
- a requirement that the report state the engineer's or geoscientist's determination regarding the applicable requirements for the setting of casing; and
- an authorization for the engineer or geoscientist to conduct the inspection in person at the location of the proposed injection well or virtually through satellite or other aerial imagery, mapping software, or other appropriate information sources.

The bill applies only to a permit application filed with the TCEQ on or after the bill's effective date. A permit application filed before the bill's effective date is subject to the law in effect on the date the application is filed, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.