

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1690
By: Gerdes
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Statutory provisions governing open meetings require notice for meetings of groundwater conservation districts, including meetings at which export permit applications are considered. Such notice must be provided in applicable counties within the jurisdiction's boundaries. However, the bill author has informed the committee that the impacts of large-scale groundwater production associated with groundwater export projects can extend far beyond the permitting district and that there are currently no requirements for applicants to inform neighboring jurisdictions of export permit applications that have the potential to disrupt access to valuable groundwater resources. H.B. 1690 seeks to improve transparency during the consideration of these permits and provide affected persons with the opportunity to provide input or adequately prepare for interruptions in service by requiring a groundwater conservation district to adopt rules relating to notice regarding an application for a permit or an amendment to a permit for the transfer of groundwater out of the district.

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. 1690 amends the Water Code to require a groundwater conservation district to adopt rules requiring that notice be given for an application for a permit or an amendment to a permit for the transfer of groundwater out of the district. The bill requires the notice to be paid for by the applicant and distributed as follows:

- by certified mail to the following recipients:
 - each groundwater conservation district that is adjacent to the district considering the application;
 - the commissioners court of each county in which such a district is located; and
 - the commissioners court of each county in which an adjacent district is located; and
- published in the following newspapers:
 - a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the district considering the application is located; and
 - a newspaper of general circulation in each county in which an adjacent district is located.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.