

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.H.B. 5659
By: Dean et al. (Hughes)
Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
5/22/2025
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The bill author has informed the committee that the Northeast Texas Municipal Water District was created by the Texas Legislature in 1953 and that the district is comprised of seven cities and is managed by a board of seven directors, with a director appointed by the city council of each of those cities. The bill author has also informed the committee that constituents in House District 7 and residents of the water district are concerned with reports that the district directors are considering selling water or water rights in executive session without public testimony and against resolutions passed by member cities against the proposed sale. H.B. 5659 seeks to address this issue by providing for a public hearing by the district regarding certain water-related contracts and municipal approval of such a contract to ensure that a matter as important as the sale of water or water rights is supported by local constituencies.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.H.B. 5659 amends current law relating to the procedural requirements applicable to interbasin transfers of water involving the Northeast Texas Municipal Water 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 Chapter 78, Acts of the 53rd Legislature, Regular Session, 1953, by adding Sections 17A and 17B, as follows:

Sec. 17A. (a) Requires the board of directors of the Northeast Texas Municipal Water District (board; district), before the district is authorized to enter into a contract for an interbasin transfer of water or acquire a permit or other authorization from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for a proposed interbasin transfer, to hold a public hearing on the proposed interbasin transfer.

(b) Requires the board to provide any interested person an opportunity to appear before the board at the hearing and speak on the proposed interbasin transfer.

(c) Requires the board to provide notice of the hearing in the manner provided by Section 49.063 (Notice of Meetings), Water Code, for a meeting of the board.

Sec. 17B. Provides that the district is authorized to enter into a contract or acquire a permit or other authorization described by Section 17A of this Act only if the contract or authorization is approved by a majority vote of the governing bodies of a majority of the cities entitled to appoint one or more directors under Section 3 (relating to the appointment of the member of the board) or 6 (relating to requiring the governing body of each city annexed to the district to appoint one director for the term ending after a certain date) of this Act.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.