

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 480
By: Perry
Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
6/12/2025
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 480 expressly authorizes local governments to enter into agreements with other governmental entities to participate in joint research or planning regarding water resources.

Questions have recently arisen in at least two regions of the state as to whether certain types of local governments have clear legal authority to enter into interlocal agreements with other governmental entities to work cooperatively on water-related joint research and planning activities. The types of activities at issue include regional and state water planning and flood planning overseen by the Texas Water Development Board, planning for joint facilities, joint planning for long-term management of aquifers, and the various research efforts that provide the underlying science and data to support those planning activities.

As issues related to water supply, infrastructure, treatment, groundwater and surface water management, drought response, and flooding become more important across the state for reasons relating to both economic development and public health and safety, it is imperative that all communities and their local governments be able to work cooperatively to promote coordination and to achieve cost savings through economies of scale via joint research and planning projects regarding issues in which they share a common interest. S.B. 480 is intended to clarify their ability to do so by providing an express, general authorization in statute for any interested local government to participate in those processes.

S.B. 480 amends current law relating to the authority of a local government to enter into an interlocal contract with certain governmental entities to participate in water research or planning activities.

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 Subchapter C, Chapter 791, Government Code, by adding Section 791.038, as follows:

Sec. 791.038. CONTRACTS FOR WATER RESEARCH OR PLANNING. Authorizes a local government to contract with another local government, the state, or the federal government to jointly participate in research or planning activities related to water resources.

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