

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 616
By: Schwertner
Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
8/11/2025
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 616 addresses aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) projects in certain areas of the Edwards Aquifer. Under the rules of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), no waste injection wells can be authorized if the wells transect or terminate in the Edwards Aquifer in Williamson County. This prohibition unfortunately also applies to recently proposed ASR injection wells that would transect the Edwards Aquifer to inject treated surface water into deeper geologic formations underlying the Edwards Aquifer for purposes of providing much needed water supplies to this high-growth area of the state. The purpose of this bill is to maintain the current prohibition on waste injection wells, while authorizing TCEQ to approve an ASR project that includes ASR injection wells that will transect the Edwards Aquifer in portions of Williamson County for injection of water into deeper geologic formations underlying the Edwards Aquifer.

S.B. 616 amends current law relating to aquifer storage and recovery projects that transect a portion of the Edwards Aquifer.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is modified in SECTION 1 (Section 27.051, Water Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 27.051(i), Water Code, as follows:

(i) Authorizes the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), by rule or permit, to authorize certain actions, including the injection of water into a geologic formation that underlies the Edwards Aquifer for an aquifer storage and recovery project that includes an ASR injection well, as defined under Section 27.151 (Definitions), that transects the Edwards Aquifer in the area of Williamson County east of Interstate Highway 35 or Medina County. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Requires TCEQ to adopt rules to implement Section 27.051(i), Water Code, as amended by this Act, not later than March 1, 2026.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.