

**BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
89R3553 ANG-F

S.B. 971  
By: Sparks  
Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs  
2/20/2025  
As Filed

**AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) offers affordable financial assistance to help Texans fund water-related infrastructure projects. These initiatives have spanned the state, from El Paso to Beaumont and Dalhart to Brownsville, providing financing for communities of all sizes to meet their water needs and regulatory standards with long-term solutions. As of November 30, 2024, TWDB has made 6,114 financial commitments for a total of approximately \$39.5 billion since the agency's inception in 1957.

During the Sunset Advisory Commission's 2022 review of TWDB, concerned parties emphasized the need for a consistent definition of "rural political subdivision" in state law to enhance the agency's effectiveness. The 88th Legislature, Regular Session, addressed this need by passing H.B. 3582, which established a definition of "rural water" developed in collaboration with TWDB and stakeholders. This definition accurately reflected the needs of rural and urban communities. Later in the session, S.B. 469 was enacted with similar language but included a scrivener's error that unintentionally expanded the definition to include urban political subdivisions. Under the Code Construction Act, S.B. 469 now controls as the most recently passed legislation, leaving the flawed definition in place.

This bill removes Section 15.001(14) of the Water Code, which was added by Chapter 1064 (S.B. 469) during the 88th Legislature. The correct definition from H.B. 3582 will remain in statute as the controlling language.

As proposed, S.B. 971 amends current law relating to the definition of a rural political subdivision for purposes of the Texas Water Assistance Program.

**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. Repealer: Section 15.001(14) (relating to defining "rural political subdivision"), Water Code.

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