

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 973
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Ways & Means
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill sponsor has informed the committee that the prohibition against information held by an appraisal district regarding visual depictions of certain residential property from being posted online has created an arbitrary obstacle to individuals accessing information about their own property. The bill sponsor has also informed the committee that allowing a basic sketch of the property to be posted online would enable a property owner to more easily access appraisal information that could assist the owner in contesting property taxes. S.B. 973 seeks to provide property owners online access to certain basic property information without resulting in the disclosure of vulnerable property features by providing for exceptions to this prohibition with respect to certain street level photographs and field records or overhead sketches with limited depictions of property.

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

S.B. 973 amends the Tax Code to change the aerial photographs excepted from the prohibition against certain residential property information in appraisal records from being posted on the Internet from an aerial photograph that depicts five or more separately owned buildings to an aerial photograph that depicts more than one separately owned building. Additionally, the bill expands the exception from the prohibition to include the following:

- a street level photograph of only the exterior of a building; and
- a field record or overhead sketch of the property that depicts only the following:
 - the outline of one or more buildings on the property;
 - the general landscape features of the property, including ponds, pools, and walls;
 - and
 - the dimensions of or distances between the buildings and features depicted.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.