

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1624
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Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code grants the Texas Water Trust the control of water rights for the purpose of environmental concerns, habitat protection, and flow management. There is currently no provision in the code that grants the Water Trust control of water rights for the purpose of water conservation and supply management. Allowing the Texas Water Trust to accept and hold water rights for conservation purposes will help to ensure access to sufficient water for future generations and contributes to state water conservation efforts.

S.B. 1624 allows the Texas Water Bank and the Texas Water Trust to accept and hold water rights for the purpose of water conservation and water resource management.

As proposed, S.B. 1624 amends current law relating to the purposes for which the Texas Water Bank and the Texas Water Trust may accept and hold water rights.

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 Section 12.028(b), Parks and Wildlife Code, as follows:

(b) Requires the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), consistent with Section 11.0235(b) (relating to providing that maintaining the biological soundness of the state's rivers, lakes, bays, and estuaries is of great importance to the public's economic health and general well-being), Water Code, and TPWD's duties and responsibilities, to encourage and facilitate the dedication of water rights in the Texas Water Trust through lease, donation, purchase, or other means of voluntary transfer for conservation or environmental needs, including for the purpose of maintaining or improving water supply management. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 15.703(a), Water Code, as follows:

(a) Authorizes the Texas Water Development Board to take all actions necessary to operate the water bank and to facilitate the transfer of water rights from the water bank for future beneficial use including but not limited to certain actions, including accepting and holding donations of water rights to meet conservation or environmental needs, including water supply management, instream flow, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, or bay and estuary inflow needs.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 15.7031(a), Water Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that the Texas Water Trust is established within the water bank to hold water rights dedicated to conservation or environmental needs, including water supply management, instream flow, rather than instream flows, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, or bay and estuary inflow needs, rather than estuary inflows.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2025.