

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1948
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Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
8/20/2025
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

A recent change to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) fire code will require fire sprinkler systems in new and significantly renovated agricultural buildings, including barns, poultry houses, cotton gins, storage facilities, livestock markets, and feed mills.

While the intent is fire prevention, this mandate is impractical for rural Texas and harmful to livestock operations. Sprinkler systems in agricultural buildings create biosecurity risks, require expensive installation and maintenance, and shut down ventilation, which can harm or kill animals before firefighters arrive. Rural farms also lack the water supply needed to support these systems.

Florida and North Carolina have already exempted agricultural structures from similar mandates, recognizing the unique needs of farmers and ranchers.

S.B. 1948 prevents requiring fire sprinklers in agricultural buildings. It ensures that fire safety regulations in Texas make sense for rural areas and do not impose costly, unnecessary burdens on farmers and ranchers.

S.B. 1948 protects Texas agriculture while allowing practical, effective fire safety measures to be used instead of one-size-fits-all mandates.

S.B. 1948 amends current law relating to the regulation of fire prevention standards for certain agricultural facilities.

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 Subtitle Z, Title 10, Government Code, by adding Chapter 3001, as follows:

CHAPTER 3001. RESTRICTIONS ON CERTAIN FIRE REGULATIONS

Sec. 3001.001. DEFINITIONS. Defines "agricultural pole barn," "governmental entity," "livestock market," and "nonresidential farm building."

Sec. 3001.002. RESTRICTION ON REGULATION OF CERTAIN AGRICULTURAL FACILITIES. Prohibits a governmental entity, notwithstanding any other law, from adopting or enforcing an ordinance, order, rule, or other measure that requires the installation of a fire protection sprinkler system in certain agricultural facilities.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.