

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 4617
By: Bell, Keith
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The High Point Special Utility District of Kaufman and Rockwall Counties furnishes water utility service to the public in northeast Kaufman County and south-central Rockwall County and does not have any incorporated municipalities within its boundaries. For most of its existence, the district primarily served customers who reside on or who farm large rural tracts of land. In 2005, developers started submitting requests for the district to serve new high-density subdivisions, commercial developments, and multi-family developments.

Most of the district's service area remains rural but these growing, densely populated areas possess the votes to take control of the district's board of directors and deny adequate representation for rural customers. Rural candidates for the board would be at a significant disadvantage when running against residents of high-density areas. The district is concerned that residents of the high-density areas could attempt to dilute or even eliminate rural customer representation on the board.

H.B. 4617 seeks to address this issue by authorizing the district's board by rule to provide for the election of some or all of the directors from single-member districts.

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

H.B. 4617 amends the Special District Local Laws Code to establish that the High Point Special Utility District of Kaufman and Rockwall Counties is governed by a board of seven directors.

H.B. 4617 authorizes the board by rule to provide for the election of some or all of the directors from single-member districts. The bill, if the board provides for such, requires for eligibility purposes of candidacy for or service as a director from a single-member district that a person be a resident of that district. These provisions expressly do not affect the entitlement of a director serving immediately before the bill's effective date to continue to carry out the board's functions for the remainder of the director's term. The provisions apply only to a director elected on or after that date. The bill expressly does not prohibit a person who is a director on the bill's effective date from being reelected to the board if the person has the qualifications required for a director under these provisions of the bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.