

SUBJECT: Regulating water well drillers; water well drillers fund

COMMITTEE: Natural Resources — favorable, with amendments

VOTE: 7 ayes — Yost, Corte, King, R. Lewis, Puente, Stiles, Walker

0 nays

2 absent — Counts, Combs

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 3 — 30-0

WITNESSES: None

DIGEST: SB 675, as amended, would eliminate references to approval of Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission rules governing well drillers by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

"Deteriorated well" would be redefined as a well that is likely to cause or will cause pollution of water, including groundwater, due to its condition. A licensed driller, licensed pump installer or well owner who plugs an abandoned or deteriorated well would be required to submit a plugging report to the executive director of TNRCC within 30 days after the well is plugged. TNRCC would be required to furnish plugging reports upon request.

The bill would allow a member of the Texas water well drillers advisory council to receive compensation for travel expenses, including meals and lodging.

TNRCC would be required to deposit all licensing funds into the water well drillers fund, with more than 20 percent of the fund could cover administrative costs.

The bill would become effective September 1, 1995.

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SUPPORTERS SAY: SB 675 is needed to clarify the law by deleting obsolete reference to Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation approval of licensing and regulation of water well drillers. TNRCC should, and already does, have final approval authority.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition.

NOTES: The amendments would redefine "deteriorated well," allow advisory council members receive travel expense compensation, require commission to allow no more than 20 percent of well drillers fund for administrative costs and require a licensed driller, pump installer or well owner who plugs an abandoned well to submit a report to the director within 30 days.

Also on today's calendar is SB 647, making some of the same changes as SB 675, but regarding water well pump installers.