

SUBJECT: Eliminating certain recycling-related duties of the General Land Office

COMMITTEE: Environmental Regulation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Bonnen, Crownover, Chisum, W. Smith, West

0 nays

2 absent — Kuempel, Flores

WITNESSES: For — Sheri Land, General Land Office

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Health and Safety Code, Ch. 361, subch. N establishes the state source reduction and recycling goal to reduce the amount of municipal solid waste disposed of in the state by at least 40 percent by January 1, 1994. If the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) finds that the goal is not being achieved, it must convene an advisory task force consisting of representatives of TCEQ, the General Land Office (GLO), local governments, and other members.

Subch. N also establishes the recycling market development board, consisting of the land commissioner, the chairman of TCEQ, the executive director of the Building and Procurement Commission, and the executive director of the Texas Department of Economic Development. (Sec. 361.423 refers to the latter two agencies by their former names: the General Services Commission and Texas Department of Commerce, respectively.)

DIGEST: HB 1707 would remove the GLO from the state source reduction and recycling goal task force. The bill also would remove the land commissioner from the recycling market development board and amend the board's membership to reflect renamed state agencies. It would eliminate current law requirements that the GLO commissioner serve as presiding officer of the board for the first year and that the GLO provide ongoing research and

assistance to the board. The bill also would repeal a current law requirement that the GLO develop and implement a statewide recycling awareness campaign.

If the land commissioner was scheduled to become the presiding officer of the board on the effective date of the bill, the chairman of TCEQ would serve in that capacity until the next scheduled rotation of service.

The bill would take effect on September 1, 2003.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 1707 appropriately would remove the land commissioner from the recycling market development board and relieve the GLO of its duty to provide ongoing research and assistance to the board. Although the GLO participates in the state's recycling programs, the agency offers little expertise that is not already provided by other board members. The bill also would eliminate an outdated reference to the GLO regarding formation of a task force on the state source reduction and recycling goal.

The agency's appropriation for recycling-related activities has been cut significantly in recent years. In 1999, the agency had four staff members dedicated to recycling and the statewide awareness campaign. With reduced appropriations and fewer staff dedicated to recycling, however, the agency has had to cut back its participation. The agency currently does not have even one staff member dedicated full-time to recycling. Other agencies, such as TCEQ, have taken over much the GLO's former activities in this area. The bill would not prevent the GLO from participating in the recycling campaign, and the agency still would provide booths or informational materials for Texas Recycles Day and other events.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB 1091 by Shapiro, passed the Senate by 31-0 on the Local and Uncontested Calendar on April 16 and has been referred to the House Environmental Regulation Committee.