

SUBJECT: Removing requirements for funding certain water supply projects

COMMITTEE: Natural Resources — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — Keffer, Ashby, D. Bonnen, Burns, Frank, Kacal, T. King,
Larson, Lucio, Nevárez, Workman

0 nays

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 14 — 31-0

WITNESSES: (*On House companion bill, HB 1222*)

For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Buddy Garcia; TJ Patterson, City of Fort Worth; Daniel Gonzalez and Steven Garza, Texas Association of Realtors; Perry Fowler, Texas Water Infrastructure Network)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Joe Reynolds, Texas Water Development Board)

DIGEST: SB 1337 would amend Texas Water Code, sec. 16.053(j), which allows the Texas Water Development Board to provide financial assistance to political subdivisions for water supply projects under certain circumstances. The bill would remove the requirements that water projects under certain programs in chapter 15 be consistent with the state water plan and that the applicant complete a water audit.

SB 1337 also would amend sec. 16.053(j) to specifically apply these requirements to water projects under ch. 15, subch. J, if the financial assistance was under the safe drinking water revolving fund.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2015.

SUPPORTERS
SAY:

SB 1337 would clean up Texas Water Code by removing outdated requirements that water projects under certain programs in chapter 15 be consistent with the state water plan and that the applicant complete a water audit. The Texas Water Development Board provides funding for water supply projects through various water assistance programs under chapter 15, and the subchapter designations for water assistance programs under that chapter were made more than 15 years ago. Since then, programs have been added, others have been changed, and some have never been funded.

SB 1337 would remove the requirement of consistency with the state water plan and the water audit requirement from programs under subchapters D and F because they have become funding mechanisms that do not provide direct funding. The bill would remove such requirements for programs under subchapter O because they have never received funding.

Also, the bill would supply needed clarification for projects under ch. 15, subch. J, regarding financial assistance for water pollution control programs. Financial assistance for such programs provides funding for both wastewater projects and drinking water projects, but the state water plan only funds water supply projects. The bill would make clear that requirements that projects be consistent with the state water plan and that a water audit be completed apply only to drinking water projects, not to wastewater projects.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The House companion bill, HB 1222 by Lucio, was placed on the General State Calendar for May 12, but not considered.