

**SUBJECT:** Requiring studies of aquifer storage and recovery projects

**COMMITTEE:** Natural Resources — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 11 ayes — Larson, Phelan, Ashby, Burns, Frank, Kacal, T. King, Lucio, Nevárez, Price, Workman

0 nays

**WITNESSES:** For — Brian Sledge, Benbrook Water Authority, City of Bryan, Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District (GCD), Prairielands GCD, Upper Trinity GCD, Wells Branch Municipal Utility District; Chris Pepper, Texas Aggregates and Concrete Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Buddy Garcia, Aqua Texas; Kent Satterwhite, Canadian River Municipal Water Authority; Jay Barksdale, Greater Irving/Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce; Bill Lauderback, Lower Colorado River Authority; Mark Evans, North Harris County Regional Water Authority; C.E. Williams, Panhandle GCD; Jim Conkwright, Prairielands GCD; Stephanie Reyes, San Antonio Chamber of Commerce; Allen Beinke, San Antonio River Authority; Christopher Mullins, Sierra Club; Stephen Minick, Texas Association of Business; Chloe Lieberknecht, The Nature Conservancy; Charles Flatten; Sacha Jacobson)

Against — None

On — Robert Mace, Texas Water Development Board

**BACKGROUND:** Water Code, sec. 11.155 requires the Texas Water Development Board, as it considers necessary, to study, investigate, and survey aquifers in the state to determine the occurrence, quantity, quality, and availability of aquifers in which water may be stored and retrieved.

**DIGEST:** HB 2005 would require the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to work with the appropriate interested persons, including groundwater conservation districts, regional water planning groups, and potential sponsors, to conduct studies of aquifer storage and recovery (ASR)

projects identified in the state water plan or by interested persons and report the results.

The TWDB also would be required to conduct a statewide survey of the most favorable areas for ASR, prepare a report with an overview of the survey, and submit the report to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House by December 15, 2018.

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, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

HB 2005 would encourage the development of aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) projects in the state by requiring the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to study potential aquifers. Currently, declining groundwater levels and intermittent river flows are curtailing water storage efforts. The state water plan, which is designed to meet water needs during times of extreme drought, projects a need for almost 9 million acre-feet of water by 2070, requiring new techniques for water storage methods such as ASR.

ASR projects have been used successfully in other states for years to store water underground, preventing surface evaporation and mitigating the sinking of land and flooding. These projects also keep surface lands from being taken out of operation by above-ground storage, freeing the property for other uses.

HB 2005 would help provide more information to local governments and all interested parties through studies of which geological formations along river basins are conducive to ASR. The bill also would encourage small communities with few resources to invest in potential ASR projects studied by the TWDB.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

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NOTES: HB 2005 would cost the state \$847,895 in general revenue related funds in fiscal 2018 and \$301,445 each year after, according to the Legislative Budget Board's fiscal note.