

**SUBJECT:** Commissioning a study on the joint use of certain public facilities

**COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 12 ayes — Paddie, Hernandez, Deshotel, Harless, Howard, Hunter, P. King, Lucio, Metcalf, Raymond, Shaheen, Slawson

0 nays

1 absent — Smithee

**WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Frank Holman; Thomas Parkinson; Ruth York)

Against — None

**DIGEST:** HB 587 would require the Texas Facilities Commission to conduct a study to assess the availability and suitability of unused and underused public facilities for joint use by two governmental entities, including the state, a county, a municipality, or a school district. The commission would assess the economic advantages of joint-use agreements and submit a written report on the study results to the governor, lieutenant governor, the House speaker, and members of the Legislature by December 1, 2022. The bill's provisions would expire January 1, 2023.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 587 would help the state save tax dollars by conducting a study that could identify public facilities that currently are sitting idle or not being used to their full potential. Public facilities are expensive to build, operate, and maintain, and state and local taxing entities have an obligation to maximize the return on taxpayers' investments.

The Comptroller's office has estimated that about 2,500 governmental entities in Texas could enter into joint-use partnerships, which suggests a large capacity for savings across the state. An example of a successful

joint-use partnership would be Pickle Elementary School, which is a joint-use venture between the City of Austin and the Austin Independent School District. It houses a public elementary school, a public library, and a community clinic. The city and the school district benefit by sharing the facilities, maintenance, and operations costs, which allows community members access to key services under one roof.

Like housemates who share rent, utility costs, and other expenses, the co-location of governmental entities in underused facilities could result in their more efficient use, a reduction in overall costs, and a decreased burden on Texas taxpayers.

If the study indicated significant capacity for joint-use agreements and savings, the Legislature would have the information it needed to pursue this opportunity in future sessions.

CRITICS  
SAY:

According to the fiscal note, the study that would be required by the bill could cost more than \$900,000, which could create a financial burden for the Texas Facilities Commission.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have a negative impact of about \$918,449 to general revenue related funds through fiscal 2022-2023.