

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1891
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Natural Resources
4-22-97
As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, the Railroad Commission of Texas (commission) is not authorized to charge fees to commercial users for the purchase of oil and gas data maintained in digital formats. The commission seeks to increase the exploration, development, and conservation of energy supplies by providing access to energy-related information maintained by the commission. Part of this effort is the development and maintenance of digital databases that may be easily accessed through the World Wide Web or through other flexible access capabilities. This bill will authorize the Railroad Commission of Texas to charge fees to commercial users for the purchase of oil and gas data maintained in digital formats.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 1891 provides regulations regarding the payment of a fee by commercial users to the Railroad Commission of Texas for the purchase of oil and gas data maintained in digital formats.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the Railroad Commission of Texas in SECTION 2 (Articles 6447k(a) and (d), V.T.C.S.) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Article 6447a-1, V.T.C.S., to provide that in Articles 6447b-6447k, rather than Articles 6447b-6447h, "commission" means the Railroad Commission of Texas.

SECTION 2. Amends Title 112, V.T.C.S., by adding Article 6447k, to authorize the Railroad Commission of Texas (commission) to charge fees, which it determines reasonably necessary to perform certain duties. Requires the commission to adopt rules establishing the rates and procedures for administering such fees. Defines "commercial user." Requires a fee paid under this article to be paid to the commission, which shall deposit all fees to its account with the comptroller of public accounts of the State of Texas. Provides that, from such fees, the commission is authorized to pay the certain costs relating to digital data, excluding the cost of collecting information that may be converted to digital formats by the commission. Authorizes the commission to adopt and enforce any appropriate rules or orders that it finds necessary to administer this article.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 1997.

SECTION 4. Emergency clause.