

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

H.B. 597  
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Natural Resources  
5/13/1999  
Engrossed

### **DIGEST**

Currently, state agencies are required by law to give preference to Texas agricultural products during their food purchasing process, if the Texas product is equal in cost and quality to those produced elsewhere. Due to a lack of enforcement, vagueness of current law, and variances in agricultural products' packaging specifications, most school districts in Texas buy only a small percentage of Texas-grown or processed agricultural products. An increase in purchase by Texas bidders would permit more money to stay within the state's economy. H.B. 597 would require school districts to give preference to products produced in Texas.

### **PURPOSE**

As proposed, H.B. 597 requires school districts to prefer Texas products to other products, if the Texas product is equal in cost and quality.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 44B, Education Code, by adding Section 44.042, as follows:

Sec. 44.042. PREFERENCE TO TEXAS AND UNITED STATES PRODUCTS. Requires a school district that purchase goods to give preference to certain goods if the cost is equal and the quality is comparable, including this state's agricultural products; goods produced, processed, or grown in the United States; and state vegetation in purchases of vegetation for landscaping purposes. Authorizes a school district to receive assistance from and use the resources of the Texas Department of Agriculture. Prohibits a school district from adopting product purchasing specifications that unnecessarily exclude Texas-grown agricultural products. Defines "agricultural products" and "processed."

SECTION 2. Requires the Texas Education Agency to conduct an analysis of purchases by school districts to determine the effectiveness of Section 44.042, Education Code, and to report the results to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives by January 1, 2001.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 1999.

SECTION 4. Emergency clause.