

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
76R3930 SMJ-D

S.B. 657
By: Brown
Natural Resources
2/28/1999
As Filed

DIGEST

Currently Texas law requires the regional water planning groups to develop regional water plans that provide for specific water management strategies for periods when “flows are at 50 and 75 percent of normal.” While this requirement is to ensure that water providers have plans for those times in which their water supplies are at levels in which drought response measures are appropriate to be enacted, the designated percentages of flows are not always relevant to certain water supplies. In addition, the water conditions of 50 percent and 75 percent of flow are difficult to define and calculate on stream segments and aquifers. S.B. 657 would require regional water planning groups to develop specific actions to be used in drought response plans when identified drought response trigger conditions of water supply sources are reached. This will result in appropriate triggers being designed for each appropriate source of water in the regional water planning areas.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 657 regulates the development of water management strategies for periods of drought.

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 Section 16.012(h), Water Code, to authorize the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission (commission) within 90 days of completing a water availability model for a river basin, to provide all holders of existing permits, certified filings, and certificates of adjudication in that river basin the projected amount of water that would be available during a drought of record, rather than when flows are at 75 percent of normal, and when flows are at 50 percent of normal.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 16.053(e), Water Code, to require each regional water planning group to submit to the Texas Water Development Board (board) a regional water plan that identifies each source of water supply in the regional planning area in accordance with the guidelines provided by the board under Subsection (d), factors specific to each source of water supply to be considered in determining whether to initiate a drought response, and actions to be taken as part of the response. Makes conforming and nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.
Effective date: upon passage.