

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2883
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Natural Resources
5/18/2007
Committee Report (Amended)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Ground water and surface water originate with rainfall and the quantity and quality of that water depends on the process by which it is incorporated into the land. Land stewardship initiatives include habitat management, wildlife conservation, watershed protection, and certain land management strategies that help to increase surface water and groundwater supplies. Current law does not recognize land stewardship as an effective and efficient water management strategy. However, land stewardship water enhancement projects exist that require legislative validation and authorization.

Currently, there are land stewardship-based water enhancement projects already underway, that need legislative validation and authorization. This legislation will promote and support current efforts by providing a clearly worded policy statement in state law recognizing the benefits of land stewardship as a significant component of comprehensive water management policy.

H.B. 2883 provides an express policy statement recognizing land stewardship as an effective and efficient water management strategy that should be part of the foundation of Texas water policy and legal framework.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 1.003, Water Code, to include the voluntary stewardship of public and private lands to benefit the water in the state, as defined by Section 26.001 (Definitions), Water Code, as part of the public policy of the State of Texas providing for the conservation and development of the state's natural resources.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 1, Water Code, by adding Section 1.004, as follows:

Sec. 1.004. FINDINGS AND POLICY REGARDING LAND STEWARDSHIP.
(a) Provides that the legislature finds that voluntary land stewardship enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the State of Texas' watersheds by helping to increase surface water and groundwater supplies, resulting in a benefit to the natural resources of this state and to the general public. Provides that it is the policy of the State of Texas to encourage voluntary land stewardship as a significant water management tool by providing assistance to land owners to conduct those activities.

(b) Defines "land stewardship."

SECTION 3. Amends Section 11.0235(b), Water Code, to provide that the legislature encourages voluntary water and land stewardship to benefit the water in this state, as defined by Section 26.001 (Definitions), Water Code.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2007.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

Committee Amendment

Amend H.B. 2883, beginning on page 1, line 5, (Engrossed version), by striking SECTIONS 1 and 2, and substituting the following:

SECTION 1. Amends Section 1.003, Water code, as follows:

Sec. 1.003. PUBLIC POLICY. Provides that it is the public policy of the state to provide for the conservation and development of the state's natural resources, including the voluntary stewardship of public and private lands to benefit waters of the state. Makes a conforming change.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 1, Water Code, by amending Subsection 1.004, as follows:

Sec. 1.004. FINDINGS AND POLICY REGARDING LAND STEWARDSHIP. (a) Provides that the legislature finds that voluntary land stewardship enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of this state's watersheds by helping to increase surface water and groundwater supplies, resulting in a benefit to the natural resources of this state and to the general public. Provides that it is therefore the policy of this state to encourage voluntary land stewardship as a significant water management tool.

(b) Defines "land stewardship."