

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1232
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Agriculture, Water & Rural Affairs
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Groundwater is a major source of water in Texas, providing about 60 percent of the 16.1 million acre-feet of water used in Texas. The Groundwater Resources Division of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) is responsible for all aspects of groundwater studies in the state, including collection, interpretation, and provision of accurate and objective information on groundwater resources in Texas. Additionally, TWDB maintains a variety of maps of the state's water resources to accurately address present and future needs of the state. While TWDB currently conducts groundwater studies for the purpose of identifying groundwater management areas across all major and minor aquifers of the state for areas that meet the criteria for that designation, no map exists that identifies the quality and quantity of groundwater in confined and unconfined aquifers.

H.B. 1232 requires TWDB to study, define, and map the quality and quantity of groundwater in confined and unconfined aquifers in the state of Texas and report the results to the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees in the senate and house of representatives that have jurisdiction over natural resources. By doing so, Texas will be better equipped to address the state's water issues with more accuracy and efficiency.

H.B. 1232 amends current law relating to a study by the Texas Water Development Board of the hydrology and geology of the confined and unconfined aquifers in this state.

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. (a) Requires the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to conduct a study of the hydrology and geology of the confined and unconfined aquifers in this state to determine:

- (1) the quality and quantity of groundwater in those aquifers, specifically regarding the salinity of those aquifers;
- (2) whether those aquifers are tributary or non-tributary;
- (3) the contribution of those aquifers to any surface flow of any water in this state; and
- (4) the contribution of those aquifers to any other aquifer in this state.

(b) Requires TWDB, in conducting the study, to produce:

- (1) a map that identifies the area and water quality of the confined and unconfined aquifers in this state;
- (2) a map that identifies which aquifers are tributary and which are non-tributary; and

(3) a report on the contribution of those aquifers to any other aquifer in this state.

(c) Requires TWDB, before conducting the study, to determine the minimum rate at which an aquifer must contribute to another aquifer in this state or to the surface flow of any water in this state in order to be included in the study.

SECTION 2. Requires TWDB to report the results of the study conducted under this Act to the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the senate and the house of representatives that have jurisdiction over natural resources not later than December 31, 2016.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.