

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R23082 JAM-D

H.B. 2879
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Business & Commerce
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

There are fractions of large lots of land throughout the state that cannot be used because counties are unable to identify the owners of the land for various reasons. If properly identified and combined with other abandoned lots, the areas could be developed in a manner that would be beneficial to the regions in which they are located.

H.B. 2879 directs the General Land Office (GLO) to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a mechanism by which a governmental entity could acquire contiguous small parcels of real property that have nominal value and are located in a county that has a population of more than 800,000 and is located on the international border; combine the properties in a manner that makes the properties marketable for development; and convey the properties for development in a manner that complies with standards prescribed by model political subdivision rules adopted by the Texas Water Development Board for ensuring compliance with minimum safety and sanitary standards for water supply and sewer services in residential areas of political subdivisions.

H.B. 2879 requires the study to establish methods for identifying property suitable for acquisition; to establish methods for identifying owners of property considered suitable for acquisition; to identify appropriate methods of acquiring, holding title to, and conveying the property and include an analysis of the appropriateness of acquiring the property through the use of a land trust or another mechanism; to identify appropriate methods of compensating the owners of the property acquired; to identify any appropriate land use or development requirements or restrictions for the property; and to identify any legislative action necessary to facilitate the establishment of a mechanism under the bill's provisions.

The bill establishes that GLO is required to implement the bill's provisions only if GLO receives donations to cover the cost of conducting the study in an amount sufficient for that purpose.

H.B. 2879 amends current law relating to a study by the General Land Office regarding the feasibility of creating a mechanism by which a governmental entity could acquire small parcels of real property in an area and convey them to a developer in order to ensure the property is developed in compliance with model subdivision rules.

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 General Land Office (GLO) to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a mechanism by which a governmental entity could:

- (1) acquire contiguous small parcels of real property that have nominal value; and are located in a county that has a population of more than 800,000 and is located on the international border;

(2) combine the properties in a manner that makes the properties marketable for development; and

(3) convey the properties for development in a manner that complies with standards prescribed by model subdivision rules adopted under Section 16.343 (Minimum State Standards and Model Political Subdivision Rules), Water Code.

(b) Requires the study conducted under this section to:

(1) establish methods for identifying property suitable for acquisition;

(2) establish methods for identifying owners of property considered suitable for acquisition;

(3) identify appropriate methods of acquiring, holding title to, and conveying the property and include an analysis of the appropriateness of acquiring the property through the use of a land trust or another mechanism;

(4) identify appropriate methods of compensating the owners of the property acquired;

(5) identify any appropriate land use or development requirements or restrictions for the property; and

(6) identify any legislative action necessary to facilitate the establishment of a mechanism described by this section.

(c) Requires GLO, the not later than December 1, 2016, to provide to the legislature a report containing the results of the study conducted under this section.

SECTION 2. Requires GLO to implement this Act only if the office receives donations to cover the cost of conducting the study required by Section 1 of this Act in an amount sufficient for that purpose.

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