

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1245
By: Perry
Finance
5/25/2021
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Reliability and accuracy of the property value study is critical because it helps determine the amount of funding a school district receives from the state.

To ensure up-to-date and accurate data is used in the study, each year the Office of the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas conducts a farm and ranch survey (FARS). This survey gathers agricultural productivity data, which helps determine the value of farm and ranch land for the study.

Unfortunately, stakeholders have noticed that the FARS is not always turned in by appraisers and landowners, or an incomplete survey is submitted. Also, there have been observations that there may be a lack of understanding on how to properly and accurately fill out the survey.

S.B. 1245 takes steps towards ensuring the accuracy and reliability of FARS.

S.B. 1245 amends current law relating to the farm and ranch survey conducted by the comptroller for purposes of estimating the productivity value of qualified open-space land as part of the study of school district taxable values.

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 Subchapter M, Chapter 403, Government Code, by adding Section 403.3022, as follows:

Sec. 403.3022. FARM AND RANCH SURVEY. (a) Requires the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas (comptroller) to conduct an annual farm and ranch survey for purposes of estimating the productivity value of qualified open-space land as part of a study under Section 403.302 (Determination of School District Property Values).

(b) Requires the comptroller to prepare and issue an instructional guide that provides information to assist individuals in completing the farm and ranch survey. Requires that the instructional guide include:

- (1) definitions of words related to property appraisal in the survey;
- (2) instructions and examples regarding how to answer the questions in the survey;
- (3) answers to frequently asked questions; and
- (4) any other information the comptroller determines is necessary to assist individuals in completing the survey.

(c) Requires the comptroller, at least once each year, to conduct an online or in-person informational session that is open to the public regarding how to complete the farm and ranch survey. Requires the comptroller to post a recording of the informational session on the comptroller's Internet website.

(d) Requires the comptroller, at least once each year, to solicit comments from the public and the property tax administration advisory board for the purposes of determining the ease and understandability of the farm and ranch survey and ensuring that the questions in the survey are designed to generate reliable answers.

(e) Requires the chief appraiser of each appraisal district to distribute the farm and ranch survey instructional guide to the members of the agricultural advisory board for the appraisal district appointed under Section 6.12 (Agricultural Appraisal Advisory Board), Tax Code, and to provide information to the board regarding how to access the informational session provided under Subsection (c) of this section. Authorizes the chief appraiser to distribute the instructional guide electronically under this subsection.

(f) Requires the comptroller to distribute the farm and ranch survey instructional guide to individuals who receive the farm and ranch survey from the comptroller and to provide information to those individuals regarding how to access the informational session provided under Subsection (c). Authorizes the comptroller to distribute the instructional guide electronically under this subsection.

(g) Provides that the definitions of words related to property appraisal included in the instructional guide are for informational purposes only and do not apply to this code or the Tax Code.

SECTION 2. Requires the comptroller, not later than January 1, 2022, to prepare and issue the instructional guide required by Section 403.3022, Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2021.