

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1160
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Natural Resources
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

A municipality in Texas can obtain the exclusive right to provide water or sewer service inside newly annexed territory. However, interested parties have observed that outside the boundaries of most cities the only incumbent utilities that may be displaced by a municipality are water and sewer supply corporations, special utility districts, and fresh water supply districts. These parties contend that municipalities may not seek single certification in areas served by investor-owned utilities, which often charge rates significantly higher than other municipally owned water utilities in the same county.

H.B. 1160 seeks to address this issue by allowing the transfer of a certificate of convenience and necessity in certain municipalities in certain counties to provide residents of those municipalities continuous and adequate water and sewer service and equitable rates.

H.B. 1160 amends current law relating to the transfer of a certificate of convenience and necessity in certain municipalities.

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 B, Chapter 552, Local Government Code, by adding Section 552.024, as follows:

Sec. 552.024. **TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATE OF CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY IN CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES.** (a) Provides that this section applies to a municipality that:

- (1) has a population of not more than 2,500;
- (2) is located in a county that has a population of 1.7 million or more and has two municipalities with a population of 300,000 or more; and
- (3) is served by a public utility that provides service to the entire municipality and charges rates for 5,000 gallons of water for residential customers that are at least 50 percent higher than the rates charged by a municipally owned utility that serves another part of the county in which the municipality is located.

(b) Requires the agency with authority over certificates of convenience and necessity for water and sewer service, on application by a municipality described by Subsection (a), notwithstanding any other law, to transfer at such time and under such circumstances as specified by a trial court a certificate of convenience and necessity for water and sewer service from a public utility to the municipality for the public utility's service area located in the municipality's corporate limits, if the municipality:

(1) has instituted a condemnation proceeding under Chapter 21 (Eminent Domain), Property Code, to acquire the property of the public utility's water and sewer system in the municipality's corporate limits; and

(2) will possess the financial, managerial, and technical capability to provide continuous and adequate water and sewer service to the area to the satisfaction of or in accordance with the orders of a trial court at the time of transfer.

(c) Requires that the transfer of the certificate not be effective unless:

(1) a judgment that transfers the real property of the public utility to the municipality becomes final and is not subject to further appeal; and

(2) the municipality has paid to the public utility the fair market value compensation due, as set by agreement or as ordered by a court judgment, for that taking of real property.

(d) Provides that this section does not expand, restrict, or otherwise alter the law with regard to a municipality's right to exercise the power of eminent domain under Chapter 21, Property Code.

SECTION 2. Provides that the changes in law made by this Act apply only to a condemnation proceeding in which the petition is filed on or after September 1, 2011. Provides that a condemnation proceeding in which the petition is filed before September 1, 2011, is governed by the law in effect on the date the petition was filed, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.