

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 606
By: Watson
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The legislature created the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) in 1934 to control floods, protect and store water, conserve land, and generate and sell electricity. The LCRA is subject to review but not abolishment under the Texas Sunset Act, and the Sunset Advisory Commission found that LCRA is a very sophisticated, well-functioning organization but could do more to improve public trust and engagement. S.B. 606 seeks to make certain statutory modifications aimed at addressing that and other commission recommendations.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 606 amends the Special District Local Laws Code to set out provisions relating to the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), following recommendations of the Sunset Advisory Commission. The bill updates the LCRA sunset review schedule to set the review to be conducted as if LCRA were a state agency scheduled to be abolished September 1, 2031. The bill prohibits a person who is appointed to and qualifies for office as an LCRA director from voting, deliberating, or being counted as a director in attendance at a board meeting until the person completes a certain training program. The bill sets out provisions relating to the training program and a related training manual. The bill authorizes a person serving on the board, notwithstanding such prohibition, to vote, deliberate, and be counted as a director in attendance at a meeting of the board until December 1, 2019.

S.B. 606 requires the LCRA board of directors to develop and implement a policy that provides a structure for public engagement in regard to water supply projects and sets out requirements for such policy. The bill requires LCRA to maintain a system to promptly and efficiently act on complaints filed with LCRA and sets out related provisions. The bill requires the board to develop and implement policies that provide the public with a reasonable opportunity to appear before the board and to speak on any issue under LCRA jurisdiction and sets out related provisions.

S.B. 606 requires the board to develop a policy to encourage the use of appropriate alternative dispute resolution procedures under the Governmental Dispute Resolution Act to assist in the resolution of internal and external disputes under LCRA jurisdiction. The bill sets out provisions related to such policy and procedures.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.