

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3619
By: Bowers
Natural Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Small-scale ranchers and farmers generally access groundwater through shallow wells that are exempt from the requirement to obtain a permit from a groundwater conservation district. These exempt wells can constitute a significant amount of groundwater use in some areas of Texas and it has been suggested that groundwater conservation districts should consider the effects that permitting decisions may have on these wells. H.B. 3619 seeks to address this issue by requiring groundwater districts to consider exempt wells when making a permitting decision.

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

H.B. 3619 amends the Water Code to include among the considerations a groundwater conservation district is required to make before granting or denying certain permits or permit amendments the consideration of whether the proposed use of water unreasonably affects wells that are exempt from the requirement to obtain a permit under statutory groundwater conservation district provisions or district rules.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.