

- SUBJECT:** Revising requirements for GLO coastal erosion studies and projects
- COMMITTEE:** Land and Resource Management — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Mowery, J. Jones, Guillen, Haggerty, Howard  
0 nays  
3 absent — Pickett, Hochberg, Noriega
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 3 — 31-0
- WITNESSES:** For — Sidney McClendon, West Galveston Island Property Owners Association, Galveston County Beach Erosion Task Force; Jerry Patterson, Texas General Land Office; (*Registered, but did not testify:*) Keeton Turner, Texas Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation  
Against — None  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify:*) Eddie D. Fisher, Texas General Land Office
- BACKGROUND:** The Coastal Erosion Protection Act (CEPRA) requires the Texas General Land Office (GLO) to conduct coastal erosion studies, demonstration projects, or response projects if it receives legislative appropriations or other funding for that purpose. GLO may work with state agencies, local governments, federal agencies, or other qualified project partners in conducting the studies or projects. An agreement with a qualified project partner to conduct a study or project must require that the partner pay at least 15 percent of the shared project cost and may contain other terms governing the project.
- DIGEST:** SB 710 would require a qualified coastal erosion project partner to pay:
- at least 25 percent of the shared project cost if the project was a beach nourishment project on a public beach or bay shore; or

- at least 40 percent of the shared project cost if the project was any other study or project, including a marsh restoration project or a bay shoreline project that was not a beach nourishment project.

Each biennium, the GLO commissioner could conduct one large-scale beach nourishment project on a public beach without requiring a qualified project partner to pay part of the shared cost if the project's cost did not exceed one-third of the amount appropriated to the agency for coastal erosion planning and response.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2003.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

SB 710 would help the GLO to combat coastal erosion. A Coastal Erosion Council working group studying ways to improve the CEPRA program found that erosion on Gulf beaches continued to be a significant problem. Conducting a single large-scale beach nourishment project would provide greater benefit against erosion than multiple smaller projects. A large-scale project replenishes an eroding beach with a large quantity of sand, extending the amount of time the sand remains in place and providing a better use of financial resources. A typical beach nourishment project under current law brings in less than 100,000 cubic yards of sand by truck from inland sources to replenish an eroding beach. However, a large-scale project could bring in 300,000 to 500,000 cubic yards of sand at a lower unit cost by dredging material from the Gulf floor and pumping it onto the beach.

The bill would allow the GLO to undertake a single large-scale beach nourishment project without requiring a local match or additional appropriation from the state by increasing match requirements for other CEPRA projects, such as marsh restoration or bay shore projects. Most of these projects already have adequate local funding capacity because navigation districts and cities have sufficient revenue to provide the matching funds. In fact, the GLO has worked with some local entities already providing a 40 percent match. Most of the critical erosion areas are along Gulf beaches where no municipality or navigation district exists to provide a local match. The coastal counties in which these areas fall often do not have sufficient resources to provide substantial matching funds.

The GLO would ensure the equitable distribution of large-scale projects by

rotating the regions in which such projects were implemented. For example, seven areas suffering from high erosion rates have been identified along the coast. Barring unforeseen circumstances, GLO would conduct a large-scale project in each area before returning to an area in which it already had completed a project.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

This bill would divert state funds from multiple local projects to a single beach nourishment project somewhere along the Texas coast. Conducting a single project could lead to inequities in the distribution of CEPRF funds along the coast. One area of coast would benefit from a single large project at the expense of other coastal areas in need of beach nourishment projects.