

- SUBJECT:** Creating the Texas Rural Water Advisory Council
- COMMITTEE:** Agriculture and Livestock — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Springer, Anderson, Beckley, Buckley, Burns, Fierro, Meza, Raymond, Zwiener
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Stan Kitzman, Brookshire-Katy Drainage District; Troy Allen, Delta Lake Irrigation District; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Michael Booth and Ilissa Nolan, Booth, Ahrens and Werkenthin; Maia Corbitt, Texans for Clean Water; Monty Wynn, Texas Municipal League; Jennifer Emerson, Texas Rural Water Association)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Mandi Hughes, COCW; Dan Hunter, Texas Department of Agriculture)
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1868 would establish the Texas Rural Water Advisory Council to assist the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).
- Duties.** The council would assist TDA in assessing the existence of, effectiveness of, or need for rural water initiatives on windblown and waterborne litter and illegal dumping in rural communities, agricultural pesticide runoff, rainwater harvesting, rural water use, and other topics.
- The council would identify and evaluate best management practices and their feasibility, costs, and benefits for municipal, commercial, industrial, and agricultural properties as they relate to the above initiatives.
- The council also would evaluate the jurisdiction and effectiveness of law enforcement, the role of state funding for incentive programs, and appropriate state oversight and community support efforts regarding rural water initiatives.

Guide and report. The council would publish a guide on best management practices for use by state agencies, counties, municipalities, and other political subdivisions responsible for rural water initiatives.

The council also would deliver a report on rural water initiatives to the lieutenant governor, House speaker, and relevant legislative committees. The report would contain legislative recommendations to implement best management practices.

The guide and report would be due November 1 of even-numbered years.

Organization. The council would consist of 15 members, appointed as specified in the bill, who would serve staggered two-year terms.

The council would meet at least twice each year and could meet at other times considered necessary by the agriculture commissioner.

The council would be administratively attached to the Office of Water within TDA, and TDA would provide staff necessary to carry out the council's duties. Other agencies would be required to provide assistance, including necessary support staff, if requested by the council.

The bill would exempt the council from provisions regarding size, composition, or duration of an advisory council established in Government Code ch. 2110.

The council could accept gifts from any source to carry out its duties.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.