

**SUBJECT:** Requiring the development of updated water availability models

**COMMITTEE:** Natural Resources — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — T. King, E. Thompson, Gámez, Kacal, Kitzman, Lalani, Price, Rogers, Zwiener

0 nays

2 absent — Metcalf, Ramos

**WITNESSES:** For — Sarah Kinkle, Texas Water Conservation Association; Carlos Rubinstein (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ronald Doughty, Central Texas Water Coalition; Edmond McCarthy, Clients of the Firm; Sam Gammage, DOW Chemical; Vanessa Puig-Williams, Environmental Defense Fund; Mike Clifford, Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance; Lauren Fairbanks, Guadalupe Basin Coalition; Jay Howard, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority; Danielle Goshen, National Wildlife Federation; David Kelly, North Texas Municipal Water District; Tristan Castaneda, Brian Sledge, Northeast Texas Municipal Water District; Brian Mast, Brian Sledge, San Antonio River Authority; Alex Ortiz, Sierra Club; Jeremy Mazur, Texas 2036; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council; Shea Pearson, Texas Chemical Council; Stacey Steinbach, Texas Water Conservation Association; Perry Fowler, Texas Water Infrastructure Network; Heather Harward, Texas Water Supply Partners; Hillary Lilly, The Nature Conservancy; Amy Stelter, Trinity River Authority; Heather Harward, Upper Trinity Regional Water District; Andrew Sansom)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kim Nygren, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality; Carla Guthrie, Texas Water Development Board)

**BACKGROUND:** Water availability models are computer-based simulations used to predict the amount of water in a river or stream under certain conditions. Some have raised concerns over the effectiveness of aging water availability

models currently in use and their limitations in accurately informing TCEQ for the purposes of permitting and fund allocation decisions.

**DIGEST:** HB 2460 would require TCEQ to obtain or develop updated water availability models for the Guadalupe, Lavaca, Nueces, San Antonio, San Jacinto, and Trinity river basins by December 1, 2026. The bill would authorize TCEQ to collect data from all jurisdictions that comprised the waters of these rivers, including jurisdictions outside the state. These provisions would expire September 1, 2027.

The bill would only require TCEQ to implement the bill's provisions if the Legislature appropriated money specifically for that purpose, though TCEQ could implement the bill's provisions using other appropriations available for that purpose.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.

**NOTES:** According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have an estimated negative impact of about \$5 million to general revenue-dedicated water resource management account no. 153 in fiscal 2024.