

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
76R8287 MCK-D

S.B. 1252
By: West
State Affairs
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As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, Texas law does not authorize a governmental body to broadcast an open meeting over the Internet. Both the state of Colorado Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Energy have recently conducted successful experimental government online hearings. Citizens are able to review the issues and provide comments which will be considered on the merits of the comment--not the personal characteristics of the individual providing testimony. S.B. 1252 authorizes a governmental body to broadcast an open meeting over the Internet in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 1252 regulates the broadcasting of public meetings over the Internet.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 551F, Government Code, by adding Section 551.128, as follows:

Sec. 551.128. INTERNET BROADCAST OF OPEN MEETING. Defines "Internet." Authorizes a governmental body to broadcast an open meeting over the Internet, subject to the requirements of this section. Requires a governmental body that broadcasts a meeting over the Internet to establish an Internet site and provides access to the broadcast from that site. Requires the governmental body to provide on the Internet site the same notice of the meeting that the governmental body is required to post under Subchapter C. Requires the notice on the Internet to be posted within the time required for posting notice Subchapter C.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 551F, Government Code, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER F. New heading: MEETINGS USING TELEPHONE VIDEOCONFERENCE, OR
INTERNET

SECTION 3. Requires the Department of Information Resources (department) to form a task force to determine whether a governmental body can take certain actions. Requires the department to report its findings to the legislature not later than September 1, 2000.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 1999.

SECTION 5. Emergency clause.