

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 1422
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Intergovernmental Relations
4/22/2015
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Established by the 78th Legislature, the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority serves the counties of Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo, Starr, Zapata, and Webb with water conservation and management activities on a regional basis. The 18-member board includes local and gubernatorial appointees representing water rights stakeholders, water utility boards, municipalities, and counties.

S.B. 1422 seeks to create an infrastructure improvement council within the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority (authority) to leverage combined resources to seek state and federal funds for the purpose of regional infrastructure improvement projects. Council membership is optional for members of the authority.

S.B. 1422 authorizes the water authority to establish an infrastructure improvement council to address critical water needs in the Rio Grande Valley. Council membership provides for a voluntary assessment for the purpose of project planning and staff support. (Original Author's / Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 1422 amends current law relating to the establishment of an infrastructure improvement council by the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority and provides authority to impose a voluntary assessment.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 1.01, Chapter 385, Acts of the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003, by adding Subdivision (4-b), to define "council."

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 385, Acts of the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003, by adding Article IB, as follows:

ARTICLE IB. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

Sec. 1B.01. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL. (a) Requires the board of directors of the authority (board) to establish an infrastructure improvement council (council) in connection with the implementation of infrastructure improvement projects within the authority's territory.

(b) Requires the board to set, according to a formula determined by the board, an annual voluntary assessment. Requires revenue from the assessment imposed under this subsection to be deposited to the credit of an infrastructure improvement fund to be administered by the council. Provides that, after the board sets the formula used to determine the assessment, the assessment may only be modified by the council.

(c) Requires a member of the conference that pays the voluntary assessment under Subsection (b) to appoint a representative to serve as a member of the council.

(d) Authorizes the council to apply for financial assistance under Subchapter G, Chapter 15 (State Water Implementation Fund for Texas), Water Code, for the implementation of infrastructure improvement projects under this article.

(e) Requires the council to study the viability of each infrastructure improvement project requested by council members to determine whether an infrastructure improvement project is eligible to receive financial assistance from the council.

(f) Provides that only members of the council are eligible to receive financial assistance from the council for infrastructure improvement projects under this article.

(g) Requires the council to establish procedures to govern the council.

(h) Authorizes the council to hire employees to implement this section and engage in infrastructure improvement projects without board approval.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2015.