

# BILL ANALYSIS: HB 1400 INTRODUCED

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## BACKGROUND

Groundwater supplies over half of the water used in Texas, and over 99% of drinking water for rural Texas ([TGPC, n.d.](#)). Groundwater conservation districts cover most of the state and nearly all of the aquifers that supply groundwater. The districts, which are governed by [Chapter 36](#) of the Texas Water Code, are the state's preferred method of managing groundwater.

Data-based decisions are critical to properly managing groundwater resources, particularly as groundwater increasingly is being used to supply water to municipal users. Districts must make important decisions related to the permitting of groundwater supply projects. However, many of the districts are poorly funded and are unable to adequately invest in the data gathering and science necessary to make informed decisions.

## PURPOSE

HB 1400 ([2025](#)) establishes the Groundwater Science, Research, and Innovation Fund, which will be administered by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). The fund would be created by adding Subchapter F-1 to Chapter 15 of the Texas Water Code. This fund aims to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to support programs and projects that advance groundwater science, research, and innovation in Texas.

The goals of the bill include improving understanding of local groundwater conditions, enhancing groundwater models for planning and decision-making, increasing groundwater use efficiency and conservation, boosting groundwater recharge, and protecting groundwater quality.

This bill will enable districts to develop and implement data gathering and analysis activities that will support critical research needs. The Groundwater Science, Research, and Innovation Fund would be funded with \$15 million over a 10-year period to support local districts. At least 35% of the fund would be reserved for rural, under-resourced districts.

This bill will provide needed resources and particularly assist “poorer” groundwater districts in order to enable districts to generate groundwater data and analyze those data to support management decisions. By enhancing the ability of districts to better understand their local groundwater conditions, the bill will bolster local control and management of groundwater resources by strengthening the tools available to groundwater conservation districts. Data-supported decisions yield the best outcomes for the constituents of districts and those who are seeking to responsibly develop water supplies.

## SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

### SECTION 1.

HB 1400 establishes a special fund in the state treasury to support groundwater science, research, and innovation. The fund will consist of money appropriated or transferred by the board, interest from deposits and investments, gifts, grants, or donations, and other revenue sources designated by the legislature. The TWDB can use the fund to provide grants for district programs and projects aimed at furthering groundwater science, including improving local groundwater understanding, developing groundwater models, enhancing water use efficiency, increasing groundwater recharge, and protecting groundwater quality.

The TWDB is tasked with adopting rules to administer the fund, including application procedures for financial assistance and the management of these funds. The Board will evaluate financial assistance applications based on the program's or project's benefits, alignment with science objectives, contribution to state and regional planning, and the financial need of the district. At least 35% of the fund's money must be used for programs or projects by districts with populations not exceeding 100,000 and annual revenues not exceeding \$250,000. The Board may require grant recipients to provide matching funds or in-kind services amounting to 25% of the grant received. Districts receiving financial assistance must share data and findings with the Board.

### SECTION 2.

The Act takes effect on September 1, 2025.

## REFERENCES

HB 1400. Introduced. 89th Texas Legislature. Regular. (2025). <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=88R&Bill=HB1400>

Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC). (n.d.). *Groundwater information*. Retrieved March 31, 2025, from <https://tgpc.texas.gov/groundwater-information/>

Texas Water Code, Chapter 36. <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/WA/htm/WA.36.htm>

