



Ensuring Texas Power Plants and Mines Maintain Access to Groundwater

AECT Position: Support

SB 1122 by Estes

Proposal

- SB 1122 amends the Texas Water Code to ensure that permitted or historic use of groundwater that supports a power plant or its associated mine cannot be curtailed by a groundwater conservation district (GCD).

Discussion

- This bill serves one purpose: to promote a sufficient supply of electricity by protecting the historic use of groundwater by power plants and associated mines.
- Power plants use groundwater for very limited uses: to ensure boiler water remains at a constant level; provide potable water for employees; and maintain fire protection systems.
- Mines pump groundwater to enable safe excavation of the soil, control dust, dewater mines to ensure mines are not caved in, and to provide potable water for employees.
- Power plants and mines require sustained access to groundwater, as they are frequently located well outside municipal water systems.
- While power plant and mine access to groundwater is critically important, the total amount of groundwater used is very small.
 - Statewide, the groundwater pumped for power and mining use in 2012 was only 1.6% of all groundwater pumped. That is a small percentage of the total groundwater pumped in Texas.
 - Yet that access to groundwater is vital to the continued operation of power plants and mines, ensuring reliable electricity for the customers they serve.
- SB 1122 will promote continued electric reliability by prohibiting curtailment of groundwater.

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