

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

HB 3544

Relating to water

To: Ways and Means Full Committee
From: Natural Resources Subcommittee
Carrier: Representative Owens

HB 3544 establishes a uniform process and timeline for contested case proceedings on new water right and water right transfer applications administered by the Water Resources Department.

The Water Resources Commission, in coordination with the Office of Administrative Hearings, is directed to adopt rules establishing uniform hearing schedules and procedural standards. These rules must include a 180-day hearing timeline, provisions for remote participation, the use of administrative law judges for settlement, and consistent timelines for determining party status. The measure also revises the requirements for protest submissions, establishes deadlines and criteria for party status requests, limits appeals, and clarifies when contested case hearings must occur.

The amendment provides funding to the Water Resources Department to support a position and related services and supplies for implementation.

The Natural Resources Subcommittee recommends HB 3544 be amended by the –A6 amendment and be reported out do pass, as amended.