

BILL SUMMARY
2nd Session of the 59th Legislature

Bill No.:	SB 1341
Version:	floor substitute
Request Number:	11018
Author:	Rep. Newton
Date:	4/23/2024
Impact:	Please see previous summary of this measure

Research Analysis

The floor substitute for SB 1341 modifies processes related to groundwater metering. The measure:

- Requires all groundwater permit holders to equip all wells with a flow meter or an alternative measuring system that has verifiable records;
- Requires the OWRB to establish a phase-in schedule requiring all permit holders to have a meter within six years. The schedule must be submitted to the Legislature for rulemaking by February 1, 2025;
- Requires the OWRB to implement policies for reviewing groundwater reports in a timely manner, modernizing data collection systems, and investigating claims of waste;
- Authorizes the OWRB to impose fines and penalties for overuse and to perform audits and spot checks on permit holders if complaints are received;
- Specifies when a groundwater permit holder must submit their usage reports and requires them to include data from a water meter. Willful failure to report usage will result in penalties or fines;
- Allows OWRB to offer, beginning January 1, 2026, a permit for a five-year allocation of the maximum annual yield, provided no annual yield exceeds 125% of the annual proportional share;
- Clarifies that any permit holder using less water than their permit allows will not have their allowance reduced;
- Creates a new process for filing complaints about groundwater waste; and
- Requires the OWRB to promulgate rules for auditing groundwater use reports, modernizing its data collection, investigating claims of waste, and imposing fines for over use.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FLOOR SUBSTITUTE AND COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

The floor substitute includes a provision for wells connected by a common pipeline.

The floor substitute amends the penalties to include a maximum one-year permit suspension, rather than a cancellation.

The committee substitute establishes a phase-in of eight years and the floor substitute reduces the timeframe to six years.

The floor substitute allows OWRB to create a permit for a five-year allocation starting January 1, 2026; the date in the committee substitute is August 1, 2025.

Prepared By: Emily Byrne, Tricia Hines

Fiscal Analysis

The measure is currently under review and impact information will be completed.

Prepared By: House Fiscal Staff

Other Considerations

None.