

SB 130 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

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Meeting Dates: 1/25, 2/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Delays sunset from January 2, 2022 to January 2, 2030 for pilot program allowing participating irrigation districts to change place of use of water within district boundaries without applying to the Water Resources Department for a temporary transfer.

No subsequent referral

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History and purpose of pilot program
- Extension of program will provide time for additional data collection, program refinement, and discussion of future program components

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In 2003, the Legislative Assembly authorized a pilot project allowing three irrigation districts to make annual place of use changes to water rights within their legal boundaries without obtaining authorization for a temporary transfer from the Water Resources Department (WRD). The pilot project required that districts meet standard water right transfer criteria and maintain records, including ensuring that there is no injury to other water rights or an expansion of the authorized irrigated acres.

According to WRD, only a small number of transfers were completed during the first years of the program leading to insufficient data to assess the pilot project. In 2007, the legislature extended the pilot to 2009. (SB 89, 2007) The project was again extended in 2009 to 2016 and expanded to include 15 districts. (SB 664, 2009) In 2015, Senate Bill 267 made some adjustments to the project, extended the sunset to January 2, 2022, and required a report to the Legislature by January 31, 2021.

Senate Bill 130 would extend the sunset on the pilot program to January 2, 2030.