

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 89TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 14, 2025

TO: Honorable Kelly Hancock, Chair, Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs

FROM: Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: SB2543 by Hancock (Relating to the location of and the amount of certain revenue that may be used for state veterans cemeteries.), **As Introduced**

The fiscal implications of the bill cannot be determined because the amount of funds that would be made available for any new state cemetery construction and operation from federal funds, legislative appropriations, or disbursements from the Veterans' Land Fund, the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund, and the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund II for the planning, operation, or maintenance of veterans' cemeteries are unknown.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

The bill would amend the Natural Resources Code related to the Veterans' Financial Assistance Program to remove the limits prohibiting the Veterans' Land Board (VLB) from selecting more than seven locations across the state for veterans cemeteries and spending more than \$7,000,000 each fiscal year from funds available in the Veterans' Land Fund, the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund, and the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund II to plan, design, operate, maintain, enlarge, or improve veterans cemeteries.

Appropriations for the VLB are included in the bill pattern for the General Land Office and Veterans' Land Board (GLO/VLB) in the General Appropriations Act each biennium.

Based on information provided by the GLO/VLB, any new cemetery construction would be dependent on grants from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and available and sufficient ongoing funding to operate the cemetery in perpetuity. According to the agency, funding from the Veterans' Land Fund, the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund, and the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund II, used for the planning, operation, or maintenance of veterans' cemeteries, are generated from loan programs and would be used to the extent that sufficient funds are generated and available. Based on information provided by the GLO/VLB, this analysis assumes that any other costs to the agency associated with the bill could be absorbed using existing resources.

For the purposes of analysis, General Revenue Fund appropriations have also been used for this purpose in addition to federal grant funds and funding from the Veterans' Land Fund, the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund, and the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund II. For example, General Revenue Fund appropriations in the amount of \$1,082,000 with 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position were provided each fiscal year of the 2024-25 biennium in the bill pattern of GLO/VLB to support operation and salary costs for the newly approved veterans cemetery in Lubbock, Texas.

Based on information provided by the Comptroller of Public Accounts, the fiscal impact to the state cannot be determined because the amount of funds that would be made available to the GLO/VLB from federal funds, legislative appropriations, or disbursements from the Veterans' Land Fund, the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund, and the Veterans' Housing Assistance Fund II for the planning, operation, or maintenance of veterans' cemeteries are unknown.

Based on information provided by the Veterans Commission, there would be no fiscal impact to the agency.

Local Government Impact

No fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 304 Comptroller of Public Accounts, 305 General Land Office and Veterans' Land Board, 403 Veterans Commission

LBB Staff: JMc, KDw, MW, JDio