

2016 STATE POLICIES

of the

Texas Farm Bureau



Our Mission

**Texas Farm Bureau's mission is to be
the Voice of Texas Agriculture.**

STATE POLICIES

Adopted by official voting delegates at the 82nd Annual Meeting of the Texas Farm Bureau, Dec. 5-7, 2015, Arlington, Texas.

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FARM BUREAU PHILOSOPHY

Preamble **101**

1. We give thanks to almighty God for the many
2. blessings He has bestowed upon us as a nation and
3. as individuals. We invoke His wisdom and direction
4. upon our every decision in order that we may be
5. worthy citizens of His Kingdom and of our nation.
6. May He grant us the grace to know and to do His will.
7. We believe that our faith in God and the democrat-
8. ic principles of free enterprise and human freedom,
9. upon which our nation was founded, are responsible
10. for its greatness. We encourage our government
11. officials to return to the concepts of this Preamble
12. concerning our belief in God.
13. We believe in the right of all people to choose their
14. own occupation free from compulsory unionism; to
15. be rewarded in accordance with their productive
16. contribution to society; to save, invest and spend
17. their earnings as they choose; and to worship as their
18. conscience dictates.
19. We believe that the present degree of centraliza-
20. tion of power and authority and the trend toward
21. further centralization of power and authority in the
22. Federal government and the apathy of American
23. people to this trend are among the greatest dangers
24. threatening our Republic and the American way of
25. life. "Planned economy" concepts such as socialism
26. and communism, fascism and other forms of totali-
27. tarianism must be opposed wherever and in whatever
28. form they may be found.
29. In order that we as individuals in our profession
30. may make greater contribution to the above stated
31. principles through group action, Farm Bureau is a free,
32. Independent, non-governmental, voluntary organiza-
33. tion of farm and ranch families united for the purpose
34. of analyzing their problems and formulating action
35. to achieve educational improvement, economic op-
36. portunity, and social advancement, thereby promoting
37. the national welfare. Farm Bureau is local, national
38. and international in its scope and influence. It is non-
39. partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character.
40. It is wholly controlled by its members through
41. majority decision and is financed by voluntary mem-
42. bership dues.

Concepts of Government **102**

1. We believe in the American, capitalistic, private
2. competitive enterprise system in which property is
3. privately owned, privately managed and operated
4. for profit and individual satisfaction. We believe in
5. a competitive business environment in which sup-
6. ply and demand are the primary determinants of
7. market prices, the use of productive resources and

8. the distribution of output. We will work for less gov-
9. ernment control.
10. We believe in the right of every man to choose
11. his own occupation; to be rewarded, according to his
12. contribution to society; and to save, invest, spend or
13. convey to his heirs his earnings as he chooses.
14. We believe that government operation of commer-
15. cial businesses in competition with private enterprise
16. should be terminated.
17. We believe government should focus on eliminating
18. waste, abuse and fraud in all tax funded programs.

Socialism and Communism 103

1. International communism is both an internal and
2. external threat to the private competitive enterprise
3. system. Communism is foreign to all the ideals of
4. the free world. It would deny man's faith in God,
5. his heritage of freedom, and his belief in justice and
6. mercy. Farm Bureau is dedicated to the defeat of
7. Communist ideology.
8. We oppose one world government and any treaty
9. or pact that encourages a one world government; we
10. favor getting the United States out of the United Na-
11. tions and the United Nations out of the United States.
12. We are opposed to socialism and communism and
13. its attempt to destroy the property rights that have
14. served as a foundation for the American way of life.
15. We strongly oppose the socialistic movements at-
16. tempt to redistribute wealth, thereby threatening to
17. destroy the system of incentives that have built this
18. great nation. We support the basic principles behind
19. the founding of our country; namely, freedom and dig-
20. nity of the individual, and his right to participate in a
21. free enterprise system. To strengthen our awareness
22. of our system of government we recommend:
23. 1. American History and World History be taught
24. in all American schools and colleges.
25. 2. The true nature of communism and socialism
26. be taught in our schools and in the armed services
27. so that people can better recognize its character, un-
28. derstand its purposes, and counteract its objectives.
29. 3. Adult education programs, including forums,
30. assemblies, and other forms of communication, be
31. promoted to increase the awareness of citizens to any
32. system of government that threatens the American
33. way of life.
34. We oppose any efforts of our government to es-
35. tablish a "North American Union" that would dilute
36. our U.S. Constitutional rights and powers, reduce
37. the sovereignty of the United States, remove the
38. supremacy of the U.S. Supreme Court, or open our
39. borders with Mexico or Canada.

States' Rights

104

1. We favor increased emphasis on the assumption
2. of responsibility by states and local units of govern-
3. ment for exercising their appropriate functions. Res-
4. sponsibility for performance of government functions
5. should be assigned to that unit of government closest
6. to the people which can administer such functions
7. effectively.
8. We urge the Texas legislature to join with the
9. legislatures of other states in passing legislative af-
10. firmations that assert their sovereign rights under
11. the Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitu-
12. tion and demand that the United States government
13. cease all unfunded mandates and interference that
14. exceeds the powers specifically delegated to federal
15. authorities by the supreme law of the land.
16. Therefore, we urge the Texas Farm Bureau and
17. the American Farm Bureau to exert all possible
18. power and influence to assert and maintain states
19. and local rights. These rights are guaranteed by the
20. Bill of Rights in both the Constitution of the United
21. States and the Constitution of the State of Texas and
22. must not be diluted.
23. We support increased efforts by the State of Texas
24. to secure our borders with Mexico. Immigration laws
25. should be enforced.

AGRICULTURAL AGENCIES

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

105A

1. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service should:
2. • continue its role of making available useful and
3. practical information on subjects related to agricul-
4. ture and home economics.
5. • continue to be a part of the Texas A&M Uni-
6. versity system.
7. • having a director who is separate from other
8. parts of the agricultural complex; thereby allowing
9. the agency to market itself and respond to the needs
10. of agriculture.
11. • continue to work primarily with all farmers and
12. ranchers as long as individuals and various farm
13. groups seek and respond to this type service, but the
14. Service should abstain from educational activities on
15. matters of political policy.
16. We support:
17. • funding for the Extension, Texas 4-H program,
18. and Wildlife Services that would be sufficient to at
19. least maintain current program levels and to con-
20. tinue these services to farm and ranch families.
21. • Wildlife Services to dedicate funds for control
22. of all species of predators affecting agriculture and
23. to consider the impact that each predator has on dif-

24. ferent sectors of agriculture production.
25. We oppose:
26. • reducing the number of ag specialists in the
27. Texas A&M System.
28. • funding reductions for the Texas A&M AgriLife
29. Extension Service. If funding reductions are neces-
30. sary, we support maintaining, to the extent possible,
31. the current programs and services to farm and ranch
32. families.
33. • any legislation that would combine the Texas
34. A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas A&M
35. AgriLife Research of the Texas A&M System.
36. • new programs providing services to non-farm
37. people at the expense of programs for farm and
38. ranch families.
39. • the elimination of the position of county AgriLife
40. Extension agents as a means of achieving cost reduc-
41. tions until all other options are considered.
42. • the combination of two or more counties into
43. one AgriLife Extension unit without the approval of
44. the counties involved.
45. • the funding of youth programs such as 4-H
46. with user fees.

Texas A&M AgriLife Research 105B

1. We support funding for on and off-campus re-
2. search. Funds should not be reduced for agriculture
3. research.

Texas Department of Agriculture 106

1. The primary purpose of the Texas Department
2. of Agriculture (TDA) should be to promote the ad-
3. vancement of agriculture and to educate the public
4. on agriculture.
5. TDA should:
6. • be adequately staffed and funded.
7. • promote and support development of agricul-
8. tural development districts.
9. • provide information and assistance in creating
10. Internet services for the sale of commodities.
11. • mirror United States Department of Agriculture
12. (USDA) regulations for the inspections and licensing
13. of kennels and only certified Department of Agri-
14. culture employees should be authorized to conduct
15. inspections.
16. We support:
17. • legislation requiring the Weights and Measures
18. Division of the Texas Department of Agriculture to
19. regulate all grain moisture testers used by commer-
20. cial grain handlers and dealers; and to levy appropri-
21. ate penalties against offenders
22. • existing laws be properly enforced with respect
23. to weights and measures, and seed laws.
24. • legislation giving the TDA regulatory authority
25. over in-house inspectors of bonded grading facilities.

26. • reimplementa-tion of Texas Department of Agri-
27. culture road inspection stations.
28. • the continued development of agribusiness and
29. value-added processing of Texas products by the
30. Texas Department of Agriculture.
31. We support repeal of the Agricultural Hazard
32. Communications Act. Until repealed, modifications
33. should be made to make the law more workable for
34. farm employers. We urge the Texas Department of
35. Agriculture to review worker protection standards
36. and re-evaluate existing policies and ensure that
37. new policies are feasible and workable with the least
38. amount of paperwork required.
39. TDA should exempt a grain buyer or handler from
40. warehouse regulation if they do not provide public
41. storage or store delivered grain that has not been
42. purchased.
43. We support to maintain the integrity of organic ag-
44. riculture, keeping organic standards strictly organic.
45. Not allowing tolerances or percentages of non-organic
46. crops, GMO plants or pesticide residue and still be-
47. ing able to retain the certified organic label. Organic
48. growers should maintain appropriate buffer zones to
49. protect their crops from pollen drift or other factors
50. that affect the integrity of their crops.

Texas Animal Health Commission 107

1. We support:
2. • having livestock producing members on the
3. Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC).
4. • legislation which would provide that the Texas
5. Animal Health Commission be exempt from provi-
6. sions of the Freedom of Information Act in matters
7. related to animal health, animal identification, and
8. disease control to protect information related to
9. individual producers, locations and animal health
10. traceback from unnecessary harassment, invasion
11. of privacy, and to enhance the provision of homeland
12. security in the agricultural sector.
13. • the TAHC guidelines for animal identification.
14. • the TAHC having the authority to determine
15. whether to close the borders of Texas to the impor-
16. tation of certain traditional or alternative livestock
17. and these powers should not be transferred into the
18. hands of the legislature or any other state agency.
19. • the right to use antibiotics for livestock & poultry
20. in matters related to animal health care.
21. • TAHC being granted enforcement authority of
22. existing laws to restrict the movement of feral hogs
23. on public roads.
24. • state revenues to fund the TAHC.
25. • the rights and opportunities of small flock or
26. urban poultry operations and encourage best man-

27. agement practices as recommended by TAHC for
28. disease control.
29. • adequate funding for TAHC to monitor poultry
30. disease at markets.
31. We oppose:
32. • the TAHC being combined with any other state
33. agency.
34. • user fees being assessed to finance TAHC or
35. any other agricultural regulatory agency; however, if
36. the legislature requires that agricultural regulatory
37. agencies assess user fees, we encourage the fees be
38. assessed proportionally for all services provided and
39. not exceed the cost of providing the service. Rather
40. than requiring fee increases we encourage agencies
41. to review their existing services to determine which
42. services may be ended or modified for cost savings.

**Texas State Soil & Water
Conservation Board**

108

1. We encourage further development of the agency's
2. program and capabilities so that future responsibili-
3. ties may be placed under its authority.
4. We support:
5. • the Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board
6. and Conservation Districts continuing to govern the
7. states conservation programs for renewable natural
8. resources.
9. • the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Dis-
10. tricts continue to be independent, locally controlled
11. bodies with directors elected by the local landowners;
12. and that the Texas State Soil and Water Conserva-
13. tion Board continue to be elected on an area basis
14. by the directors of local Soil and Water Conservation
15. districts.
16. • the present staffing of local Soil & Water Con-
17. servation districts be maintained.
18. • the State Legislature appropriate matching
19. funds to Soil and Water Conservation Districts on a
20. per county basis. This allows multi-county districts
21. funds to be based on the number of counties in the
22. districts, relieving inequities now experienced by
23. multi-county districts.
24. • any funding increase to the Texas State Soil
25. and Water Conservation Board should be directed
26. for local use.
27. • local Soil and Water Conservation Districts abil-
28. ity to provide technical assistance and incentives for
29. voluntary soil and water conservation planning and
30. implementation.
31. • the use of state funds for maintaining small
32. watershed flood control structures, built under the
33. USDA PL-566 program, that are listed as public
34. safety concerns.
35. We oppose any appointees to the Texas State Soil

AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

Commodities-General 109

1. All commodities are inter-related, and any change
2. in supply, demand or price of one affects the others.
3. Careful consideration should be given to the economic
4. impact of a major change in one commodity's policy
5. on other commodities before such policy is approved.
6. We support:
7. • country of origin labeling of all foreign products
8. imported into Texas.
9. • requiring public institutions to buy domestic
10. agricultural products when they are available.
11. • legislation granting producers a "Hold Harm-
12. less" position from any changes that occur after their
13. production is sold and leaves their control.
14. • strengthening TDA's regulatory authority to
15. audit and inspect storage facilities and records. The
16. bonding amount required for storage facilities should
17. be increased.
18. • licensing of grain dealers.
19. • a statewide producer funded commodity indem-
20. nity program to protect producers and ensure full
21. payment is received for commodities.
22. • small scale local farmers being allowed to sell
23. low risk foods such as jams, jellies, raw honey, baked
24. goods and dry herbs without being required to have
25. a commercial kitchen.
26. We oppose:
27. • all attempts by political subdivisions (cities or
28. counties) to limit the production of, or the use of,
29. genetically modified crops or animals.
30. • growing castor beans in Texas until adequate
31. regulations are enacted and educational programs
32. are available to address storage, handling, and pro-
33. duction concerns and low ricin varieties are available,
34. so that the accidental adulteration of our food and
35. feed supply is prevented.
36. • agricultural programs that adversely affect any
37. agricultural commodity.

Citrus 110

1. We support:
2. • strict enforcement of maturity, size, and grade
3. standards for all citrus shipped into Texas.
4. • continuation of recent safeguards and the ban
5. on shipments of citrus fruit and nursery stock into
6. Texas due to the continuing spread of citrus canker
7. and greening disease into additional nurseries and
8. production areas
9. • Texas Department of Agriculture inspecting for
10. diapaepes weevil and Asian citrus psyllid.

1. We support:
2. • the STAX Group Risk Program of Crop Insurance or other additional shallow loss plans of insurance specifically developed for cotton that would address the World Trade Organization issues with Brazil.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. • the Cotton Promotion and Research Program.
8. • a full-time statewide cotton specialist.
9. • studies for feasibility of containment, suppression and/or eradication of pink bollworm.
- 10.
11. • charging for the exact amount of time the bale is stored in the warehouse.
- 12.
13. • specific cut-off date for application of 2,4-D Ester in counties where cotton is produced to coincide with uniform recommended planting dates for cotton in each county.
- 14.
- 15.
16. • the registration of Propazine (Milo Pro) for use on cotton.
- 17.
18. • commodity (cotton) contracting is an essential component of the marketing system for all producers (sellers). In order to provide an effective and fair system for contracting (cotton) the following elements should be included:
- 19.
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.
- 23.
24. 1. Clear identification of the type of contract that is being offered and the terms of the contract.
- 25.
26. 2. Growers (sellers) not being subjected to supply cotton to a buyer based on crop estimates.
- 27.
28. 3. A fair and equitable conflict resolution process that includes elements protecting sellers such as mediation or dispute resolution conducted in the county where the crop was grown.
- 29.
- 30.
- 31.
32. 4. A uniform, standard contract containing terms agreeable to both buyers and sellers (ie: Texas Real Estate Contract) and governed by Texas law.
- 33.
- 34.
35. We oppose:
36. • changes in the trade rules of cotton trading associations that pass marketing and storage charges from buyer to seller.
- 37.
- 38.
39. • the present penalties on low micronaire cotton.
40. ***Boll Weevil Eradication:***
41. We support:
42. • a mandatory statewide Boll Weevil Eradication Program and favor state funding assistance.
- 43.
44. • a plow-up date be established for cotton to aid in the control of boll weevils in affected areas.
- 45.
46. • use of controlled burning of CRP acreage prior to spring planting in the affected areas to assist in the boll weevil eradication program.
- 47.
- 48.
49. • stalk destruction dates for areas under pink bollworm or boll weevil regulation continue to be set by the Commissioner of Agriculture following a public hearing for the area affected. The cotton stalk destruction deadline should be strictly enforced.
- 50.
- 51.
- 52.
- 53.
54. • the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation developing
- 55.

56. procedures to ensure that cotton harvesting equip-
57. ment and raw cotton products being transported
58. are certified boll weevil free. No equipment should
59. cross any zone boundary without being certified boll
60. weevil free.
61. • allowing producers harvesting cotton near, on, or
62. after the stalk destruction deadline to have ten days
63. after harvest to destroy stalks without incurring a
64. penalty or fine.
65. • TDA in its effort to control non-commercial cot-
66. ton, (not located in a crop field), by making the users
67. of gin by-products aware they are responsible for the
68. destruction of any re-growth resulting in hostable
69. cotton from the use of such products.
70. • chemical as well as mechanical means as an
71. approved method by the TDA for cotton stalk de-
72. struction.
73. • the TBWEF using prudent spending practices
74. and striving to reduce overhead.
75. • TBWEF personnel staying on existing turnrows
76. and designated roads.
77. • removal of the 10 day application period for
78. cotton stalk destruction, with a 24 hour notification
79. for extension enforced and TBWEF and TDA should
80. coordinate efforts to accomplish this task
81. • work with Mexico to control boll weevil popula-
82. tions along the Texas/Mexico border.
83. • development of an efficient funding mechanism
84. for producer assessments to fund the TBWEF that
85. will not exceed current producer cost.
86. • a beltwide (multi-state) program to assist pro-
87. ducers on the Mexican border with control of boll
88. weevils which will serve as a buffer for the entire
89. cotton industry.
90. • transferring funds between zones in the state
91. to provide extra funds to areas that experience an
92. unexpected outbreak and to assist producers along
93. the Rio Grande River in maintaining a buffer zone.
94. • Federal and State cost share monies for
95. TBWEF as long as there are active zones in the state.
96. We oppose a mandatory referendum for boll weevil
97. eradication and support a referendum upon request
98. by 10 percent of producers.

Dairy

112

1. Only a qualified Texas Department of Health
2. Sanitarian should be permitted to degrade a "Grade
3. A" dairy based on a sample of milk. The sample
4. should be in possession of a qualified sanitarian at
5. all times until delivered to a state laboratory. The
6. Department, at producer's request, should retest a
7. producer's milk as promptly as possible following an
8. unacceptable test.
9. Imitation dairy products should be labeled as such,
10. particularly when displayed with dairy products.
11. The minimum requirements for consumer grade

12. milk should be increased to 12 percent solids. Component
13. standards should comply with state regulations
14. and be printed on the product labels.
15. We support:
16. • an inspection service that will emphasize milk
17. quality rather than physical requirements and ap-
18. pearance of facilities.
19. • an annual state inspection, unless a milk sample
20. fails to meet the state requirements for quality. A
21. failing sample should result in an immediate visit by
22. the state inspection service.
23. • the dairy promotion and advertisement program.
24. • the concept of regional compacts to price Class
25. 1 milk and legislation to create a Texas state milk
26. marketing order.

Forestry

113

1. We support:
2. • the right to harvest our crop of timber since it
3. has been classified as an agricultural crop.
4. • the use of agroforestry and integration of land
5. use practice.
6. • the education of the public economic and envi-
7. ronmental importance of timber and its production.
8. • the principles of Sustainable Forestry Initiative
9. (SFI), Best Management Practices (BMP), prescribed
10. burning, and the availability and use of effective
11. pesticides, to manage and promote the health of all
12. forested areas and their neighboring properties.
13. • increased funding for the Texas Forest Service
14. in order to fulfill its increased responsibilities for
15. fighting wildfires statewide.
16. • the task of regenerating sufficient acreage to
17. timber production to satisfy the economics of domestic
18. and export markets and the environmental needs
19. of all concerned, ensuring an adequate supply of
20. nursery seedstock by fostering policies favorable to
21. private or public landowners, through reduced taxes
22. and/or abatements, eliminating frivolous lawsuits,
23. and reducing restrictive regulations and harvesting
24. mitigated forestlands.
25. • the Texas Forest Service remaining under the
26. jurisdiction of TAMU System.
27. • genetics research for improved hardwood plant
28. stock to meet the demand of hardwood markets and
29. increased forest diversity.
30. When insects, fire, disease or noxious infestations
31. occur in state or national forests, parks, or other pub-
32. licly owned property, appropriate agencies should be
33. required to immediately apply proper management
34. and protection practices to control these problems
35. and prevent their spread to private land.

Fruits and Vegetables **114**

1. We support:
2. • uniformity of state and federal standards and
3. inspections for fruits and vegetables produced in and
4. imported into Texas and the United States.
5. • Land Grant Colleges to research genetic en-
6. gineering to develop new varieties of fruit trees
7. and vegetables for disease, nematode and insect
8. resistance.

Hay and Forage **115**

1. We recommend the Texas Department of Agri-
2. culture coordinate with the USDA in establishing
3. standards for hay testing.
4. We support:
5. • the development of a federal crop insurance
6. program for hay producers.
7. • government assistance for building private hay
8. storage facilities.

Honey **116**

1. We support:
2. • Texas A&M investigate the adequacy of the
3. honeybee inspection service to ensure proper inspec-
4. tion and supervision to better serve the beekeeper.
5. • Texas honey standards being set at 100 per-
6. cent of the definition of honey; sweet, viscous fluid
7. elaborated by bees from nectar obtained from plant
8. nectaries, chiefly floral.
9. • appropriate officials take effective legal action
10. to end the deliberate adulteration of honey by using
11. corn syrup.
12. • honey labeled as honey being pure honey with
13. no additives. Any additives should be labeled as such.
14. • Texas A&M and the USDA continue monitoring
15. the expansion of the Africanized Bee and the Varroa
16. Mite, while obtaining the necessary funding to limit
17. this expansion.
18. • priority be given to the rapid development of
19. Varroa and Tracheal Mite control methods that will
20. be economically useful to beekeepers.
21. • Texas A&M and USDA jointly develop an ap-
22. plied method of rearing European queen bees inside
23. an Africanized area.
24. • the beekeeping industry and the American Farm
25. Bureau Research Foundation support Africanized
26. Bee and Varroa and Tracheal Mite research.
27. • continuation of the Texas European Honeybee
28. Certification Program administered by the Texas
29. Apiary Inspection Service.
30. • legislation allowing private property owners
31. or their agents to control wild swarms or colonies of
32. honeybees or Africanized Bees on their own property.
33. • legislation allowing beekeepers registered with

34. the Texas Apiary Inspection Service to remove bees
35. without regulation from the Texas Structural Pest
36. Control Board.
37. • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the
38. school lunch nutritionists encouraging use of pure
39. quality honey in the school lunch program.
40. • a cooperative program among commercial bee-
41. keepers, farmers, ranchers and other land managers
42. to develop bee habitat where feasible and possible.

Horses

117

1. Processing and exportation of equine meat should
2. be legal when performed in compliance with USDA
3. Humane Slaughter of Livestock regulations. We re-
4. cognize a healthy horse racing industry is beneficial
5. to Texas horse breeders.
6. We support:
7. • all horses sold by private treaty or through auc-
8. tion markets should be tested for Equine Infectious
9. Anemia (EIA).
10. • continuing the classification of horses as live-
11. stock and personal property.
12. • legislation authorizing Texas & Southwestern
13. Cattle Raisers Association brand inspectors to inspect
14. horses for brands and identifying marks at all posted
15. markets and slaughter plants in the state.
16. • changes in the current Texas Transportation
17. Code regarding vehicle and trailer registration to
18. include, as farm use, transportation of horses between
19. farms and veterinarians, breeding facilities, train-
20. ing facilities, and for demonstration, sale, pick up
21. and delivery in trailers, with or without temporary
22. personal accommodations, designed with intended
23. purpose to haul livestock.
24. • changes in the current Texas pari-mutuel law
25. designed to increase revenue to racetracks, resulting
26. in larger purses, breeders' awards and other industry
27. incentive programs.
28. • legislation allowing the placement of VLTs
29. (Video Lottery Terminal) at all race tracks in Texas.
30. • equine owners/producers making the decision
31. on who performs the floating of equine teeth and
32. chiropractic care.
33. • a humane horse processing facility in Texas.
34. We oppose horses being classified as companion
35. animals.

Livestock

118

1. We urge that the brand inspection law be extended
2. to cover all slaughter plants. We oppose compulsory
3. statewide branding, but we support district or re-
4. gional brand laws when established on a local option
5. basis. However, we recommend that each cattleman
6. adopt an individual permanent method of identify-
7. ing his cattle. County clerks should be required to

8. notify animal brand owners, by mail, concerning the
9. re-registration of animal brands.
10. We support:
 11. • State funding for a brucellosis testing program
 12. as needed.
 13. • an eradication program of the horn fly.
 14. • implementation and funding for the National
 15. Strategic Plan for the Cattle Fever Tick Program
 16. developed in 2006. Immediate funding should be
 17. made available to eliminate fever ticks from livestock
 18. and wildlife in the temporary preventive quarantine
 19. areas of Texas. An awareness program should be
 20. implemented to educate and to assist Texas ranchers
 21. in identifying this pest.
 22. • any bull 18 months or older sold through a
 23. commissioned livestock sale should be for slaughter
 24. purposes only, unless accompanied by a current,
 25. negative trichomoniasis test.
 26. • an animal disease traceability program that is
 27. a voluntary market driven program until such time
 28. as there is a federal mandate requiring the establish-
 29. ment of such system. The program should have the
 30. following guidelines:
 31. 1. The program should be as simple and cost ef-
 32. fective as possible for producers.
 33. 2. The federal government should provide metal ID
 34. tags at no cost, and cost sharing for radio frequency
 35. ID tags.
 36. 3. Confidentiality of producer information must
 37. be respected and changes in the Freedom of Infor-
 38. mation Act must be made to further ensure that
 39. confidentiality.
 40. 4. The Texas Animal Health Commission will
 41. maintain the state animal ID data base.
 42. 5. Livestock markets will continue recording
 43. owner addresses with USDA back tags.
 44. 6. ID is mandatory at the stocker operator/order
 45. buyer level for cattle going out of state.
 46. 7. Information shall be made available only to
 47. the proper animal health authorities in the event
 48. of an animal disease incident and must not be used
 49. for any other purpose or by any other governmental
 50. authority.
 51. 8. Identification of animals will not be required be-
 52. fore movement from the original registered premise.
 53. 9. Responds to the specific needs of each species
 54. rather than an identical program being required for
 55. all species.
 56. 10. Uses the current brucellosis eradication ID
 57. system as one method of cattle identification.
 58. 11. Producer must be protected from liability for
 59. acts of others after livestock have left their control.
 60. 12. Support the flexibility of using currently es-
 61. tablished and evolving official identification methods.
 62. • under Country of Origin Labeling, only animals
 63. that are born, raised and processed in the U.S. are

64. eligible for a "Product of USA" or similar label.
65. • expanded facilities and increased personnel
66. working at the Texas Department of Agriculture ex-
67. port pens along the Texas/Mexico border. We encour-
68. age the Texas Department of Agriculture to cooperate
69. with Mexican authorities at all levels to create ways
70. to reduce the large volume of livestock awaiting
71. approval for passage into Mexico at these facilities.
72. • a concerted joint Texas/Mexico effort to control/
73. eradicate bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis.
74. • the work of the U.S./Mexico Bi-National Tubercu-
75. losis and Brucellosis Committee.
76. • the Texas Cattle and Deer Tuberculosis Man-
77. agement Plan using regionalization approach to
78. controlling movement of cattle exposed to infected
79. herds with TB.
80. • continued research of bovine growth hormones
81. with special emphasis on human health and the ef-
82. fects on carcass quality.
83. • measures to hold owners of dogs liable for dam-
84. age to livestock and property.
85. • legislation that would prohibit dogs that are
86. known to worry or kill goats, sheep, poultry, calves,
87. or other livestock, from running at large.
88. • the humane treatment of all domestic animals
89. and wildlife. We recognize that livestock and wildlife
90. are part of the human food chain, they are not equal
91. to humans, nor do they have human rights.
92. • continuation of the Texas Veterinary Medical
93. Diagnostic Lab and the Texas Animal Health Com-
94. mission Lab as separate entities, each with its own
95. distinct mission.
96. • minimum guidelines of the National Research
97. Council's recommendation for phosphorus levels in
98. feed rations.
99. • livestock assistance programs for natural di-
100. sasters.
101. • revenue assurance programs. The producer
102. should have the option to participate in government-
103. assisted insurance.
104. • state funding of the Rural Veterinarian Incen-
105. tive Program.
106. • financial or other incentives to increase the
107. number of large animal veterinarians.
108. • the expansion of the current veterinary college
109. and/or the establishment of additional Colleges of
110. Veterinary Medicine in the State of Texas.
111. • surveillance for screwworms on a state and
112. national level, and continued eradication efforts on
113. the international level.
114. • uniform guidelines for control of the fever tick
115. in Texas.
116. • soliciting Mexico's assistance in increasing
117. the width of the Mexican "border barrier zone".
118. Inspections should continue for brands, marks and

119. other identifying characteristics at posted markets
120. in Texas.

- 121. • the open range doctrine.
- 122. • legislation requiring penalties for the owner of
- 123. livestock which are habitually allowed to run at large
- 124. with reckless disregard to the welfare and property
- 125. of others.
- 126. • Texas estray laws being amended to require that
- 127. the proceeds of the sheriff's sale of impounded estrays
- 128. be used for compensation of property damages caused
- 129. by the estrays. The damages should be determined
- 130. by a panel of disinterested landowners.
- 131. • a State law be passed that clarifies and states
- 132. as a principle of law that due to the unpredictable
- 133. nature of any livestock and livestock activities, those
- 134. who participate in these activities have to accept the
- 135. inherent danger and responsibility of their actions.
- 136. • livestock and poultry manure be classified and
- 137. promoted as reusable by-products or organic fertil-
- 138. izer.
- 139. • auction and commission companies be required
- 140. to furnish a copy of the weight ticket to the seller of
- 141. all livestock sold on a weight basis.
- 142. • the regulation of livestock imports to protect
- 143. domestic livestock from foreign animal diseases.
- 144. • the development of agricultural information
- 145. and education programs that will give the public
- 146. a clear, realistic, and technically accurate perspec-
- 147. tive of animal rights issues relative to producer
- 148. responsibilities.
- 149. • the selection committee of the College of Vet-
- 150. erinary Medicine at Texas A&M University to place
- 151. greater emphasis on selecting new students who will
- 152. pursue food animal practices.
- 153. • the Texas Animal Health Commission and the
- 154. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service should con-
- 155. tinue to work together to educate producers on the
- 156. rules and regulations of the Trichomoniasis Program.
- 157. • all live cattle entering the U.S. from Mexico
- 158. should be identified with a firebrand indicating
- 159. import.
- 160. • all imported live cattle from other countries
- 161. destined for commercial feedlots should be spayed
- 162. or castrated and S branded.
- 163. • efforts to extend to bison producers the same
- 164. legal status and protection afforded to other livestock
- 165. producers.
- 166. • adequate funding for research and control of
- 167. the lone star tick.
- 168. We oppose:
- 169. • bison from Yellowstone Park being transported
- 170. to Texas.
- 171. • restrictions on the sale and/or administration of

- 172. antibiotics and other drugs for animal health by producers or their agents, unless such use is adequately proven detrimental to human health.
- 174.
 - any attempt to impose regulations on palpation of livestock.
- 176.
 - any changes to the current animal cruelty laws that adversely impact the normally accepted practices of handling livestock.
- 178.
 - any methane or greenhouse gas tax levied on livestock and/or wildlife because of normal biological bodily functions.
- 180.
 - muscle meat grown in a laboratory labeled as meat.
- 182.
 - muscle meat grown in a laboratory labeled as meat.
- 184.
 - muscle meat grown in a laboratory labeled as meat.

Nursery and Greenhouse 119

- 1. We support legislation that would make it unlawful to sell or offer for sale any plants or nursery stock which are not viable (represented as live plants or live nursery stock) at the time and place of sale.
- 2. We oppose local invasive plant list ordinances, that would lead to differing, conflicting, and uncoordinated efforts to control or ban potentially harmful plant species.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Peanuts 120

- 1. We support:
 - a voluntary checkoff program administered by the Texas Peanut Producers Board.
 - Texas peanut growers' effort to develop a program to promote peanut consumption.
 - research to increase production and guarantee crop integrity, and any other activities which would be beneficial to Texas peanut producers.
 - legislation authorizing the Texas Commissioner of Agriculture to establish uniform grades and sizes of peanut seed, and to enforce proper labeling of such grades and sizes.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

Pecans 121

- 1. We support:
 - state legislation to establish grades and standards on thin shell fancy pecans, specifying the approximate kernel content of pecans sold to consumers by dealers or handlers of such pecans.
 - genetic engineering to develop new varieties of pecans for disease and insect resistance.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Poultry 122

- 1. We support:
 - updating the Texas Egg Labeling and Grading Law to assure consumers a quality product, and eliminate the present inspection fee now assessed.
 - continuous inspection of out-of-state eggs by the Texas Department of Agriculture at retail outlets so
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

7. that they will meet the requirements of the Texas
8. egg laws.
9. • improving relationships between companies
10. and producers.
11. • requiring length of contracts to adequately pro-
12. tect growers' investment in buildings and equipment.

Ratites **123**

1. We support:
2. • legislation that would insert the family name
3. Ratite (rather than exotic fowl) when any regulatory
4. agency or legislation refers to Emu, Ostrich, Rhea
5. and/or Cassowary.
6. • the promotion of ratite value-added products.
7. • allowing producers the choice of the most eco-
8. nomical method for identifying ratites.

Rice **124**

1. We support:
2. • rice producers and related entities of the rice
3. industry continuing support of the U.S. Rice Produc-
4. ers Association.
5. • the U.S. Rice Federation when the policies are
6. beneficial to rice producers.
7. • work by the Texas Rice Research Foundation and
8. Texas A&M Research Center at Beaumont to combat
9. blackbirds and red rice in rice fields.
10. • the release of genetic engineered rice.

Sheep and Goats **125**

1. We support:
2. • the establishment of wool, mohair and meat
3. product processing plants within the State of Texas.
4. • increased funding for research and development
5. for sheep, mohair and meat goat production.
6. • differentiation of mohair and meat goats by the
7. Texas Agricultural Statistical Service.
8. • feasible enrollment of sheep producers in the
9. APHIS Scrapie program.

Soybeans **126**

1. We support a national soybean promotion and
2. research checkoff to support the programs of the
3. Texas Soybean Producers Board and the American
4. Soybean Association.

Wheat and Feed Grains **127**

1. We support:
2. • all grain samples be kept a minimum of ten (10)
3. days and that grading results be available within
4. twenty-four (24) hours.
5. • all in-load suction grain probes used for auto-
6. matic sampling be approved by the USDA Research
7. Management Office.
8. • the United Sorghum Checkoff Program.

9. • continuation of research and production of wheat
10. seed, insecticides and production practices to help
11. control disease and pests in order to maintain and
12. improve current yields and profitability.
13. We oppose:
14. • any type of grain compact between states.
15. • the addition of foreign matter to grains.
16. • any practices by grain handling companies that
17. result in a reduction of grain quality.

Wildlife

128

1. We support:
2. • legal sports hunting.
3. • the right of landowners, within legal limits, to
4. control hunting and fishing on their land, both un-
5. fenced and fenced property.
6. • research, law enforcement, and educational
7. activities designed to improve hunting and fishing
8. for this and future generations.
9. • laws and regulations that make it illegal for a
10. person to use a spotlight from a public road, other
11. than onto his own property, except in cases of emer-
12. gency.
13. • the arrest and removal of all people who disrupt
14. the rights of hunters that hold a valid Texas hunting
15. license and/or permit.
16. • Texas Parks and Wildlife Departments leasing
17. rather than acquisition of property to provide public
18. hunting opportunities.
19. • classifying exotic game as personal property and
20. that it not be regulated.
21. • classifying farmed elk in Texas as exotic live-
22. stock.
23. • Texas Legislature's efforts to reverse the quail
24. decline in Texas.
25. • legislation that prohibits public hunting in Texas
26. public streams and riverbeds.
27. • legislation that would exempt all property
28. owners from liability for damages or injuries caused
29. by wildlife, including Africanized Bees, on private
30. property.
31. • clarifying hunter harassment laws so that nor-
32. mal agricultural activities cannot be construed as
33. harassment by a hunter on adjoining property.
34. • an exemption from the Endangered Species Act
35. for those exotic species located in Texas that, although
36. endangered in their native country, are thriving in
37. Texas under private management and ownership.
38. • classifying feral hogs as an invasive species and
39. not as exotic animals.
40. • additional state funding for animal damage and
41. depredation control.
42. • programs of cost share approaches to control
43. deer and/or feral hog damage to crops and/or property.

44. • continued research to develop a live test for CWD
45. (Chronic Wasting Disease) and support TPWD and
46. TAHC work to keep CWD under control.
47. • a 3 percent maximum limitation on the number
48. of deer that have to be sacrificed for the testing of
49. this disease prior to intrastate relocation.
50. • legislation to repeal the law that requires land-
54. owners to purchase hunting and/or fishing license to
55. hunt or fish on one's own property.
56. • all money received from fish and game license
57. fees and park entrance fees shall go to the Parks
58. and Wildlife Department with proper legislative
59. oversight.
60. • rights of private property owners to be recog-
61. nized and respected by the Texas Parks and Wildlife
62. Department by giving greater attention and follow-up
63. on citizens input concerning game laws at county
64. public hearings.
65. • laws and regulations pertaining to hunting,
66. fishing, and trapping seasons, bag limits, license fees,
67. and damages to agricultural properties by hunters
68. and fishermen, trespassers and wildlife to be compat-
69. ible with normal agricultural practices and private
70. property rights.
71. • local landowners notification prior to any trap-
72. ping and translocating of game species.
73. • law enforcement officers protect the rights of
74. hunters on public land.
75. • fine for illegal hunting be increased, and repeat
76. offenders be charged with a felony and automatic fine
77. including full restitution when it applies to damaged
78. or destroyed property.
79. • Texas Parks and Wildlife Department use land
80. acquisition funds for operating, rather than buy-
81. ing more park land, while at the same time closing
82. existing parks.
83. • the hunting season for all game species begin on
84. a Saturday or other first holiday morning and end on
85. a Sunday or other last holiday evening.
86. • the Governor appoint bona fide ranchers and
87. landowners from the whitetail deer areas of Texas to
88. the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission.
89. • Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission designat-
90. ing the spring turkey hunting season "shotgun or
91. archery only" for safety reasons.
92. • Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the
93. Texas Animal Health Commission address disease
94. problems associated with interstate and intrastate
95. shipment of native wildlife, particularly those related
96. to the hunting economy in Texas.
97. • cooperation between landowners to ensure deer
98. blinds, feed, feed plots, and feeders are more than
99. 100 yards from boundary fences for safety purposes
100. without encouraging any new laws.
101. • the closing of the Managed Lands Deer Permit
102. (MLD) season the first weekend in February.

103. We oppose:
104. • any designation of exotic livestock animals as
105. an invasive species.
106. • normal agricultural practices, such as top seed-
107. ing, be considered “baiting.”
108. • regulations that require a landowner to pay for a
109. lease license to be able to lease their land for hunting.
110. • regulations that require landowners to have a
111. hunting license to kill feral hogs, coyotes and other
112. non-game animals.
113. • killing of “trophy” deer on Managed Lands Deer
114. Permit (MLD) land with a firearm outside of the dates
115. of the general firearm season set by TP&W.
116. • any efforts that result in conversion of Texas’
117. wildlife to private ownership.

AGRICULTURAL PROMOTION

Information 129

1. We recognize the vital importance of accurate
2. crop and livestock reports, market price reports and
3. county agricultural statistics in the marketing of
4. farm and ranch products.
5. We support:
6. • programs and appropriations that provide ac-
7. curate and up-to-date marketing information for
8. farmers and ranchers.
9. • an educational program be implemented to
10. educate the general public that we have the safest
11. food supply in the world, and that our economical
12. food supply is a partial result of government farm
13. programs.
14. • TDA including hay quotations with their 800
15. telephone service grain quotes.
16. • public television programs that are devoted to
17. agriculture on a regular basis.
18. • the creation of a statewide Ag Day for schools to
19. recognize the importance of agriculture. This should
20. be in conjunction with National Agriculture Day.
21. • the local water districts, land grant universities,
22. and agricultural extension agencies continuing their
23. roles as educators.

Marketing 130

1. We will work to develop foreign and domestic
2. markets for our agricultural products.
3. We support:
4. • the development of a producers protection act to
5. cover agricultural production contracts and legisla-
6. tion clarifying producers’ ownership of commodities
7. delivered to a facility and kept in open storage.
8. • farmers’ ability to choose arbitration, mediation
9. or a civil trial in any and all disputes between farmers
10. and agribusinesses. We therefore support legislation
11. that prohibits clauses in agricultural marketing or

12. production contracts that require farmers to submit
13. to arbitration and give up rights to mediation or a
14. civil trial.

15. • regulations that provide for prompt payment
16. and/or payment on demand by grain dealers.

17. • adequately bonding of all posted markets, meat
18. packers, processors and farm commodity commission
19. sales offices to protect the consignor and buyer.

20. • checkoffs voted by producers for commodity
21. promotion.

22. • the establishment of a statewide beef checkoff
23. program in the event the national Beef Checkoff
24. Program should be discontinued.

25. • a state Beef Checkoff Program in an amount
26. to be determined by producers. The Beef Promotion
27. and Research Council of Texas would have the au-
28. thority to retain all collections in the State or send
29. a percentage to National Programs according to the
30. following guidelines:

31. 1. Funding produced by a Texas checkoff shall
32. be used for promotion, research and education in
33. Texas and/or;

34. 2. Promotion and education in export markets
35. through programs conducted by the Texas Beef
36. Council or through programs operated by the U.S.
37. Meat Export Federation with direct funding from
38. the Texas checkoff;

39. 3. Any funds in excess of in-state and export needs
40. shall be sent to the Cattlemen's Beef Board for Fund-
41. ing of national programs;

42. 4. No funds from a Texas checkoff shall be used to
43. replace the state share of funding from the national
44. checkoff.

45. 5. Direct funding for research and programs that
46. improve the profitability of Texas beef producers.

47. • the National Beef Promotion and Research
48. Program.

49. • separation of the Federation of State Beef Coun-
50. cils from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association
51. by the appointment of an administrator to oversee
52. the Federation of State Beef Councils.

53. • a corresponding increase for imported boxed
54. beef.

55. • agricultural products be marketed on the basis of
56. uniform standards and grades and that food products
57. be clearly identified by grade in retail outlets.

58. • market agencies, processors and retailers re-
59. flecting the value of quality products through price
60. differentials.

61. • all meat products containing fillers be labeled
62. identifying the filler and the percentage use.

63. • the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in its
64. educational program of improved livestock market-
65. ing procedures, to include revised feeder and stocker
66. grades of cattle.

67. • the TDA requiring individuals who buy com-

68. commodities and check them for aflatoxin be required
69. to take a second sample when it is requested by the
70. farmers selling the commodities.
71. • the use of Texas grown fruits, vegetables and
72. other products in the federal W.I.C. program.
73. • a producer cooperative beef packing facility in
74. Texas.
75. • tax-free bonds to enable agricultural producers
76. to develop facilities for value-added products.
77. • the TDA “Go Texan” campaign.
78. • wine makers being allowed to market their
79. products at their production sites.
80. • agritourism as an important potential for agri-
81. culture growth.
82. • allowing electronic food stamp benefits to be
83. accepted at farmers’ markets.
84. We oppose:
85. • any monopolistic practice that would have a
86. detrimental effect on the free market.
87. • any checkoff system when the funds are not
88. controlled by the producers of that commodity.
89. • farmer’s market vendors being required to
90. purchase a vendor’s license from city or county gov-
91. ernments.

Research

131

1. We support:
2. • continuation and intensification of agricultural
3. research programs, including mechanical, chemical,
4. biological, organic and other methods, to solve current
5. and anticipated problems in agriculture.
6. • efforts to ensure that research done is appropri-
7. ate, necessary, and non-repetitive, and that data be
8. used to do comparative analysis between the different
9. methods for cost effectiveness and practicality.
10. • funds be made available for all agricultural
11. research.
12. • intensive research to improve soil and soil test-
13. ing methods for Texas.
14. • Texas A&M or TDA developing and operating a
15. state of the art soil testing facility.
16. • increased efforts through biotechnology to in-
17. crease the marketability of our products, solve envi-
18. ronmental concerns and increase net farm income by
19. decreasing input costs and improving product quality.
20. • biotechnology research, labeling and product
21. development.
22. • traditional agricultural research programs.
23. • market research for the use of U.S. guar.
24. • research being conducted at Texas A&M AgriLife
25. Research facilities throughout the state that is di-
26. rected towards beneficial commercial agriculture pro-
27. duction in the region where the centers are located.
28. • an active advisory committee comprised of lo-
29. cal agricultural producers which offers input to the
30. research center in their area.

31. • research efforts at each Texas A&M AgriLife
32. Research center be coordinated among AgriLife
33. Research, USDA/ARS and private research as ap-
34. propriate.
35. • AgriLife Extension personnel being utilized by
36. AgriLife Research centers to disseminate results of
37. research work to local agricultural producers.
38. • Texas A&M and USDA continuing research for
39. general and specific crop pollination requirements
40. for such crops as hybrid cotton, sunflowers, soybeans,
41. cucurbits, rapeseed and canola.
42. • Texas A&M and USDA continuing applied re-
43. search on alternative crops.
44. • development of affordable desalination of brack-
45. ish, saline and seawater to increase the supply of
46. fresh water.
47. • research and development of heat and drought
48. tolerant seeds.
49. • all private and public universities and USDA
50. to reinstate or expand the oats and wheat breeding
51. and research programs.
52. We oppose:
53. • the practice of an entity obtaining exclusive
54. rights to results derived from taxpayer-funded re-
55. search.

AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY PROGRAMS

Agricultural Chemicals 132

1. We support:
2. • educational programs that teach agricultural
3. producers and laborers safe chemical handling prac-
4. tices according to label directions.
5. • continued research and experimentation relative
6. to the use of farm chemicals to promote a viable and
7. productive agriculture.
8. • the safe use and promotion of biotechnology and
9. genetically modified plants which reduce our reliance
10. on chemicals.
11. • the use of sound science for the basis of any re-
12. strictions or bans on the use of agricultural chemicals.
13. • requiring any group that challenges a previ-
14. ously approved as safe chemical to pay for the new
15. test unless they prove the safety issue to be true.
16. • legislation which provides pesticide authority
17. be placed in state government rather than in other
18. political subdivisions.
19. • lifting of state restrictions on current pest con-
20. trol products used in other states.
21. • the Texas Department of Agriculture issuing
22. a temporary applicators license immediately upon
23. completion of all requirements. No fee or tax should
24. be charged for a private applicators license.
25. • regulations governing application of agricul-

26. tural chemicals to be workable, effective, and should
27. always be accompanied by an economic impact
28. statement.
29. • state restrictions on farm chemicals not to exceed
30. EPA labels.
31. • reviewing the use of herbicides and chemicals
32. by area, rather than nationwide
33. • requiring regulations and an applicator's license
34. for the use of "restricted use" chemicals in urban
35. areas, households, and yards.
36. • continued research for methods to control weed
37. species that have developed herbicide resistance.
38. • farm chemical manufacturers and dealers
39. providing farmers with a place to dispose of empty
40. chemical containers.
41. • TDA recalling, collecting and disposing of all
42. outdated farm pesticides, with no penalty for posses-
43. sion of these chemicals.
44. • State funding for annual agricultural waste
45. pesticide collection events through TDA or TCEQ
46. throughout the state on a rotational basis at no cost
47. to participants on a strict no-questions-asked basis.
48. • farm chemical manufacturers packaging chemi-
49. cals in returnable, reusable, refundable containers
50. that are permanently marked as to product content.
51. • the creation of a clearinghouse for chemical prob-
52. lems so producers can call in to pinpoint chemicals
53. that are not working.
54. • consistent state and federal record keeping
55. requirements.
56. • continued use of 2, 4-D where it can be safely
57. applied and strict enforcement of chemical laws
58. pertaining to the Butyl Ester form of 2, 4-D after a
59. county's cut-off date.
60. • Lorsban chemical being approved for the control
61. of Russian Wheat Aphid.
62. • "Reflex" chemical being approved for West Texas.
63. • the use of Atrazine for commercial and agricul-
64. tural use only.
65. • the registration of carbofuran granular and
66. liquid formulation for the control of wireworms in
67. grain sorghum and corn, and for aphids in cotton.
68. • subjecting imported agricultural commodities to
69. the same agricultural chemical restrictions as applied
70. to domestically produced commodities.
71. • a state requirement that all anhydrous ammonia
72. tow vehicles be equipped with a fully functional water
73. storage container for first-aid purposes.
74. • expanded biological pest control research.
75. • biological pest control programs that are use-
76. able, practical and feasible substitutes for chemical
77. controls.
78. • the use and funding of Integrated Pest Manage-
79. ment Programs in the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
80. Service.
81. • legislation to prevent towns, communities, or

82. cities from regulating or limiting the use of agricul-
83. tural pesticides.
84. • making available new and “proven safe” pesti-
85. cides by:
86. 1. allowing more use of Fast Track full registra-
87. tion;
88. 2. giving the Texas Department of Agriculture
89. more authority to authorize use of “proven safe”
90. pesticides in emergency situations without waiting
91. for EPA approval; and,
92. 3. making Section 18 authorization good for 18 or
93. 30 months so that the farmer can use it if the same
94. problem occurs the next year.
95. • the revision of current pesticide application laws
96. to be more producer-friendly.
97. • TDA obtaining authority to use a combination of
98. “Arsenal” and “Roundup” for the control of salt cedar.
99. • requiring an applicator to be licensed or certified
100. when applying any aquatic pesticides.
101. • restitution for those who have false claims filed
102. against them for misapplying agricultural chemicals.
103. • any person or entity filing a false claim be held
104. accountable for TDA’s cost of testing.
105. We oppose:
106. • the EPA or TDA being the main source of infor-
107. mation for restricting or banning pesticides.
108. • the right of TDA to have unrestricted access to
109. private property of farmers and ranchers using the
110. 1080 collar and/or M-44 devices. (Confidentiality of
111. the users should be protected.)
112. • the TDA regulations that are responsible for
113. the rising cost of liability insurance for commercial
114. applicators of agricultural products (chemicals).
115. • farmers and ranchers being held liable for dam-
116. ages arising from the use of any chemical that has
117. been applied according to label instructions.
118. • charging a fee or tax for a private applicators
119. license.
120. • any regulation that would require a permit to
121. apply a chemical for crop protection.
122. • politically mandated buffer zones.

Feed and Fertilizer Law 133

1. We support:
2. • a feed and fertilizer control law, with adequate
3. funds, personnel, and enforcement authority to cover
4. all regulations related to ingredients and weights
5. and measure for commercial feeds and fertilizers in
6. bulk, sack or liquid form.
7. • the sale of high aflatoxin corn, cottonseed, and
8. other commodities that have been detoxified within
9. the state as long as the buyer is informed.
10. • the toxicity levels of aflatoxin need to be re-
11. viewed and reevaluated.
12. • increased oversight and accountability of the

13. State Chemist and the Texas Feed and Fertilizer
14. Control Service.
15. • the Feed & Fertilizer Control Service Advisory
16. Committee consisting of farmers and ranchers that
17. represent 50 percent of the committee; feed proces-
18. sors who process for their own purposes should not
19. be permitted to represent end users because they
20. neither pay tonnage fees nor are under the jurisdic-
21. tion of the feed law.
22. • Texas Feed and Fertilizer Control Service
23. regulations that require feed tags to clearly label
24. ingredients so that kinds of grains, sources of protein,
25. TDN and kinds of roughage will be placed in order of
26. percentage and not labeled by a generic description.
27. • the Fertilizer Control Act provisions for the
28. labeling of fertilizer showing minimum guaranteed
29. analysis, including percentage of water soluble nu-
30. trients; chemical source; elements derived from; and
31. if it is a blended fertilizer.
32. • analysis being made at least quarterly and
33. penalty for violations should be severe enough to
34. ensure compliance.
35. • the state Feed and Fertilizer Control Service
36. dealing more effectively with repeat violators.
37. • tolerances should not be relaxed.
38. • regulations requiring the calcium content and
39. solubility of agriculture lime be guaranteed to the
40. consumer.
41. We oppose:
42. • cities and counties enacting more restrictive
43. regulations on fertilizer facilities than state law.
44. • fertilizer falling under the same regulatory
45. guidelines as pesticides and other chemicals.
46. ***Ammonium Nitrate:***
47. We support:
48. • regulations implemented by the Office of the
49. Texas State Chemist be reasonable and reduce risks
50. associated with ammonium nitrate storage while
51. preserving availability.
52. • regulations that do not limit the availability
53. and affordability of ammonium nitrate fertilizer for
54. agricultural use as determined through a compre-
55. hensive cost-benefit analysis and are promulgated
56. using negotiated rule making.
57. • training programs for fire departments in areas
58. where ammonium nitrate is stored.
59. • Tier Two reporting for the storage of ammonium
60. nitrate to the proper authorities.
61. • the Office of the Texas State Chemist being the
62. preferred regulatory authority for fertilizer storage
63. and handling.
64. • increased research on stabilizing agents for
65. nitrogen fertilizers.

Plant Diseases and Insects 134

1. We support:
2. • all efforts to eradicate the fire ant and Raspberry
3. crazy ant.
4. • controlling fire ants on all government owned
5. lands.
6. • state and federal funded research for a control
7. program for insects and diseases of plants and ani-
8. mals.
9. • quarantine regulations that control the quaran-
10. tined plant as well as any host plant.
11. • a systematic method of reviewing quarantine
12. parameters and communicating any updates to pro-
13. ducers in a timely fashion.
14. • control and eradication of the citrus black fly,
15. Mediterranean fruit fly, horn fly, white fly and aphid,
16. Bermuda grass stem maggot, and Hessian fly.
17. • an effective grasshopper control program in
18. Texas.
19. • adequate funding for research of the biological
20. control or eradication of the Southern Pine Bark
21. Beetle.
22. • the efforts of the U.S. Forest Service to control
23. the Southern Pine Beetle by the cut and leave and/
24. or salvage methods on wilderness areas and on all
25. other national forest land in Texas.
26. • increased state and federal research on the
27. control or eradication of the Africanized Bee and
28. the Japanese beetle and dissemination of resulting
29. information to the general public.
30. • research on Phynatotricul Omnivorum (root rot).
31. • prescribed burning of the CRP land without
32. penalty to the landowner and/or tenant when due
33. to overwintering of insects in Conservation Reserve
34. Program lands.
35. • the Feed & Fertilizer Control Service measures
36. to assure a more uniform and equitable system of
37. testing for aflatoxin.
38. • increased research on genetics and culture prac-
39. tices to reduce aflatoxin and support the approval of
40. Novacil for use on corn intended for livestock feed.
41. • funding for ergot control in grain sorghum.
42. • adequate funding for research, control, and
43. eradication of army worms in Texas.
44. **Karnal Bunt:**
45. USDA should:
46. • work cooperatively with the wheat industry to
47. designate Karnal bunt as a minor plant pest/disease.
48. • set tolerance levels, based on sound science,
49. that are appropriate to each segment of the wheat
50. industry.
51. • sponsor an international meeting of scientists to
52. evaluate the status and strategies for management
53. of the smut and bunt diseases of cereals worldwide,
54. with particular attention to Karnal bunt.

- 55. • take a leading role in reevaluation of international policies on the use of quarantines to prevent
- 56. the movement of cereal smut and bunt fungi, and
- 57. maintain a research effort on smut and bunt diseases
- 64. of cereals, including Karnal bunt.
- 65. • deregulate Karnal bunt and handle it as a quality
- 66. issue.
- 67. • continue compensation discussions with the
- 68. minimum compensation level the same as 1996 and
- 69. should include harvesters and transporters establish
- 70. consistent regulations for sanitizing equipment
- 58. to limit the movement of Karnal bunt or any other
- 59. disease.
- 60.

Seed Law 135

1. We support revisions of the Texas Seed Law to
2. reflect the following:
3. • stronger enforcement and increased penalties
4. for violators.
5. • the Commissioner of Agriculture be required to
6. publish quarterly a list of violators.
7. • information on the registration or analysis tag
8. should show the year grown and
9. the actual germination, uniformity, and vigor of
10. the seed.
11. • prohibiting the shipment of vegetable plants
12. identified as grown from hybrid seed when the plant
13. is grown from non-hybrid seed.
14. • requiring seed companies to include the results
15. of annual cold germination and vigor tests on the
16. seed tag of cotton and grain sorghum.
17. • protected seed varieties being allowed to be sold,
18. variety stated, between farmers as long as one of the
19. parties is involved in the production of said seed.
20. • farmers being allowed to use or to sell to other
21. farmers, cottonseed grown on their own farm.
22. • regulating the quality and varieties of wild
23. flower seeds in order to prevent the unwanted spread
24. of noxious weeds through seed sales.
25. • requiring all certified peanut seed sold for plant-
26. ing purposes in Texas to meet zero noxious weed seed
27. tolerance.
28. • require germplasm and variety names of seed
29. be stated on the bag and certification tag.
30. • require germplasm and variety names of seed
31. be stated in advertising of seed varieties.
32. • allow the sale of “Bin Run” seed for cover crops
33. (non-harvest use) and livestock grazing.
34. • technology seed fees being prorated based on
35. yield per acre with a cap.

Weed Control 136

1. We support:
2. • legislation requiring state and/or county
3. governments to use either mechanical or chemical

4. means, following TDA rules and regulations, to control brush and noxious weeds before they mature
5. on rights-of-way, or allowing adjacent landowners
6. and operators to control weeds and brush when
7. necessary.
- 8.
9. • legislation requiring state and/or county governments to work with farmers or ranchers who have property adjoining roads allowing them to manage and hay the rights-of-way under contract with the state and/or county governments with guidelines to be followed by the farmer or rancher. If these guidelines are followed, there should not be any liability incurred by the farmer or rancher.
- 10.
11. • enactment of legislation detailing the responsibility of each governmental agency concerned with enforcement of such controls. This legislation should provide for severe penalties for failure of control and for recourse by damaged landowners.
- 12.
13. • the Texas Noxious Weed Control District Law (VTCA, Agriculture Code, Chapter 78); noxious weeds should include Johnson grass, cocklebur, sunflower, blueweed, thistle and sandbur.
- 14.
15. • expansion of the field bindweed program to include all affected counties in Texas.
- 16.
17. • programs to control or eradicate invasive species, including Salt Cedar.
- 18.
19. We oppose:
- 20.
21. • Texas Department of Transportation planting of any grass which may be detrimental to adjoining land.
- 22.
- 23.
- 24.
- 25.
- 26.
- 27.
- 28.
- 29.
- 30.
- 31.
- 32.
- 33.

LABOR

General Labor

137

1. We support:
2. • enforcement of the Texas “right to work” law and recommend that it be added to the state constitution.
- 3.
4. • the Texas Workforce Commission canceling its cooperative agreement with the U.S. Labor Department and operating as an independent state agency.
- 5.
6. • an increase in the minimum number of employees that fall under Texas Workforce Commission jurisdiction.
- 7.
8. • raising the payroll thresholds used for Workers’ Compensation and the Texas Workforce Commission as the minimum wage increases.
- 9.
10. • replacement of any employee of a state entity or school district as soon as the employee strikes or uses any of the other commonly known weapons of labor unions such as slowdown or call-in-sick techniques.
- 11.
12. • legislation making unions responsible for their actions in violating their contracts.
- 13.
14. • true reform of Workers’ Compensation insurance laws in Texas including the elimination of Trial
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

21. de Novo and unnecessary litigation which makes
22. Workers' Compensation insurance costs prohibitive
23. for employers.
24. • multiple business entities under one ownership
25. which file separate federal employers tax returns,
26. also file separate Texas Workforce Commission
27. quarterly reports.
28. • any agricultural operator working a non-agricul-
29. tural job be eligible for full unemployment benefits.
30. • mandating the Texas Workforce Commission
31. to allow 30 days for an employer that is under their
32. investigation to set a date for them to audit their
33. records at the employer's place of business.
34. • allowing employers 12-14 days upon receipt of
35. certified mail from the Texas Workforce Commission
36. to appeal an unemployment claim filed against them.
37. • increasing the screening of unemployment ap-
38. plicants by the TWC to prevent collection of unem-
39. ployment benefits without just cause.
40. • clarification of just cause for termination in
41. which an employer could justifiably terminate an
42. employee and that employee be denied benefits
43. • restricting any unemployed from filing for un-
44. employment claims for 5 years, when that employee
45. files a false claim.
46. We oppose:
47. • the creation of a state labor department.
48. • any changes in the present state picketing laws.
49. • mandatory deduction of any tax or membership
50. dues from an individual's pay.
51. • use of union dues or corporation funds for the
52. support of political candidates.
53. • any state or national law and/or regulation
54. mandating hiring on any basis other than ability.
55. • the unionization of public employees.
56. • providing state aid such as welfare and unem-
57. ployment compensation to workers while on strike.
58. • the hiring or use of minors for the purpose of
59. dispensing or selling materials in heavily congested
60. traffic areas or hazardous areas.
- 61.

Farm Labor

138

1. We defend the right of farm workers to organize
2. and bargain collectively without the assistance of
3. federal or state government.
4. We support State laws and regulations concern-
5. ing farm labor that contain the following principles:
6. • secret ballot elections.
7. • prohibition against harvest-time strikes.
8. • unbiased arbitration of labor disputes, using the
9. concept that the arbitrator shall choose one of the
10. final proposals, or a compromise, of the two parties
11. involved to ensure speedy settlement of the dispute.
12. • prohibition against secondary boycott.
13. • legal recourse for injured third parties.

14. • prohibition against the use of compulsory dues
15. for political purposes.
16. • denial of tax-exempt status to any organization
17. using compulsory dues for political purposes.
18. • prohibition against the Texas Workforce Com-
19. missions solicitation of labor for out-of-state jobs.
20. • workers' compensation on a voluntary basis by
21. employers.
22. • a bonding requirement for commercial labor
23. recruiters and their sub-agents with a penalty for
24. violation of any labor recruiting law of \$1,000 or three
25. months in jail for each offense.
26. • provisions for school-age minor employment
27. when employment does not interfere with school
28. program.
29. • a requirement that parents and employers
30. share the responsibility of fulfilling child-labor law
31. requirements.
32. • prohibition against licensing crew leaders.
33. • prohibition against any group of laborers gather-
34. ing on a producer's property for any reason without
35. producer's consent.
36. We support:
37. • legislation to develop a definition of contract
38. labor to include all employees hired for specific,
39. short-term jobs not normally done by permanent
40. employees.
41. • penalties for fraudulent suits or harassment
42. of farm employers or farm employees by the Legal
43. Services Corporation and/or its agents.
44. • expenses for lawsuits found to be brought for
45. frivolous reasons be paid by the attorney filing the
46. suit.
47. • the use of agricultural labor from foreign coun-
48. tries when local labor cannot be secured.
49. • the exemption of seasonal agricultural employ-
50. ers from the state unemployment compensation law.
51. • an unemployment compensation tax rate for
52. seasonal employees at the lowest Texas Workforce
53. Commission rate if unemployment compensation
54. tax is required.
55. • the retention of the current agricultural exemp-
56. tions from unemployment compensation.
57. • lowering of workers' compensation rates for
58. custom harvesters.
59. • laws that would prevent the Texas Rural Legal
60. Aid from producing and distributing material de-
61. signed to promote lawsuits against farm employers.
62. • exemption of agricultural wages from state
63. minimum wage laws.
64. • a change from calendar to annual reporting
65. requirements for state unemployment taxes.
66. • a change from quarterly threshold levels to an-
67. nual threshold levels.
68. • increasing these threshold levels to reflect wage
69. inflation that has occurred since the enactment of

70. agricultural coverage, and that it be indexed for
71. inflation.
72. • excluding farm and ranch workers from work-
73. ers' compensation insurance. Until accomplished,
74. we favor:
75. 1. lower rates with a deductible clause for agri-
76. culture.
77. 2. laws being clarified and simplified for agricul-
78. tural workers.
79. 3. exemption of employers with 5 or fewer em-
80. ployees.
81. 4. agricultural employers having the option of
82. either private insurance or workers' compensation
83. insurance.
84. We support the following guidelines to reform the
85. workers' compensation system:
86. 1. The Texas Legislature continues its study to
87. reduce premiums and provide for fair, equitable, and
88. workable agricultural workers' compensation laws.
89. 2. Segregating rate classifications so agricultural
90. employers pay lower rates on hand laborers than on
91. equipment operators.
92. 3. Those agricultural employers otherwise exempt
93. from workers' compensation insurance should not
94. be liable, nor lose basic common law of defense, if an
95. employee gains employment by presenting falsified
96. documents to said employer.
97. 4. Provide for criminal penalties for fraudulent
98. workers' compensation claims.
99. 5. Owners, stockholders and relatives of owners
100. and stockholders should be exempt from the work-
101. ers' compensation act if they choose to be excluded.
102. If they choose to be excluded, their payroll or employ-
103. ment should not count towards the minimum payroll
104. or number of employees before the Texas workers'
105. compensation act takes jurisdiction.
106. 6. Workers' compensation policies should require
107. premium payments on a quarterly basis as they ac-
108. crue and not demand full payment at time of policy
109. issue.
110. We oppose:
111. • the formation of a state labor relations board.
112. • legislation which requires employers to deter-
113. mine the citizenship or legal immigration status of
114. employees, or which penalizes employers for hiring
115. illegal aliens.
116. • the classification of migrant workers as a sepa-
117. rate class of labor.
118. • a state minimum wage law; however, as long
119. as a state law is in effect, its provisions should not
120. be more burdensome than the provisions found in
121. federal wage laws.
122. • allowing temporary or seasonal workers hired in
123. agricultural-related industries to file for unemploy-
124. ment benefits.

TAXES

Tax Structure Generally **139**

1. We support:
2. • a more equitable tax structure that requires all
3. the people to share in the responsibility of supporting
4. governmental entities.
5. • the Secretary of State to work with the attorney
6. general and county tax collectors to utilize the state-
7. wide voter registration roll to locate and collect from
8. delinquent property tax violators.
9. • abolishing the Heavy Equipment Inventory Tax
10. on equipment for agricultural use.
11. • a constitutional amendment prohibiting a state
12. income tax. If the State of Texas adopts an income
13. tax, all ad valorem taxes should be abolished.
14. • retaining all agricultural sales tax exemptions,
15. including current exemptions for food, medical ex-
16. penses and industry.
17. • a balanced budget with no increase in taxes
18. or fees and additional cuts in state spending before
19. considering increased taxation.
20. • members of the Texas congressional delegation
21. co-sponsoring a federal retail sales tax as a complete
22. replacement for all forms of income, inheritance,
23. Social Security and Medicare taxation.
24. We oppose:
25. • retroactive taxes.

Property Taxes **140**

1. We support:
2. • a legislative review of Section 23.55 of the
3. Texas Tax Code, regarding rollback taxes, to define
4. the intent of the law and evaluate potential impacts
5. to agriculture. Depending on review, we support a
6. reduction in rollback taxes for ag valuation that will
7. avoid any negative impacts on agriculture.
8. • repealing, or reducing and constitutionally cap-
9. ping, all property taxes and lowering the current
10. appraisal cap. All increases above the cap should
11. be approved by countywide election. Any new tax
12. should be accompanied by a pro-rata reduction in
13. property taxes.
14. • legislation for property tax relief that allows
15. for the implementation of a voter approved sales
16. tax to help finance voter approved bond issues at
17. the county level. The sales tax would exist for the
18. life of the bonds or until voters recalled in a proper
19. election. This sales tax will be in addition to any
20. existing sales tax.
21. • property tax relief efforts in the State of Texas.
22. • the state constitution retaining, as a permanent
23. provision, assessing for tax purposes agricultural
24. land according to its productive value. Legislation
25. should mandate compliance with agricultural use

26. value provisions by all agencies which levy and col-
27. lect property taxes.
28. • legislation that would deny the power of eminent
29. domain and taxing authority to development districts
30. until a district referendum has passed.
31. • appraised values reflecting any decreased use
32. and/or value as a result of power lines, pipelines, oil/
33. gas field roads, oil/gas field locations, pipeline facili-
34. ties, and wind turbines.
35. • taxation of property and assets of public and
36. private utilities by appropriate taxing jurisdiction.
37. • legislation that reduces taxable value and/or tax
38. rate (primarily school taxes) on idled agriculture fa-
39. cilities to a level where the facility can be maintained
40. with the intent of the facility restarting in the future.
41. • apiary be recognized as an agricultural en-
42. terprise and receiving ag valuation on related real
43. property.
44. • all structures and facilities used for producing
45. agricultural income not being valued separately when
46. income method is used to value farms and ranches.
47. • legislation exempting buildings used for the
48. storage or protection of farm equipment, tools, feed,
49. livestock, poultry, animal and poultry waste, and
50. other agricultural supplies from property taxes.
51. • legislation to exempt dairy barn equipment from
52. property taxation and that the dairy barns be taxed
53. at the same rate as other agricultural buildings.
54. • all implements of husbandry remaining exempt
55. from property taxes.
56. • legislation to prevent taxing authorities from
57. applying penalty taxation surcharges whenever
58. rollback taxation applies to the sale or change of use
59. of agricultural land.
60. • Article 8, Section 19 of the state constitution,
61. relating to exemptions for farm products and family
62. supplies, be retained. Orchards should qualify for
63. this exemption.
64. • incorporated cities being prohibited from col-
65. lecting city taxes from any area designated as farm
66. and ranch, as long as such land is operated as a farm
67. or ranch.
68. • the present law, as passed by the Legislature
69. in 1983 (S.B. 969), pertaining to the authority of
70. certain counties should be amended to exempt farm
71. and ranch property.
72. • increasing and applying the homestead exemp-
73. tion and over age 65 exemption for all ad valorem
74. taxes. All property taxes on homesteads should be
75. frozen at the age of 65. Due to inflation, these ex-
76. emptions should be indexed using the local appraisal
77. district calculated inflation index for rising property
78. values. A homestead should be defined as being up
79. to 200 acres, and classed as agricultural land at the
80. owners option, for taxation purposes in this state.

81. • election of appraisal districts' boards of directors
82. and oppose a state appraisal system controlled from
83. Austin. Appraisal districts should be allowed to do
84. only those jobs intended by the Texas Legislature.
85. There should be no statewide or area wide methods
86. of property valuation. Section 5.10 of the Property
87. Tax Code entitled "Ratio Studies," should be repealed
88. and we oppose any effort to require mandatory re-
89. valuation in an appraisal district. The Property Tax
90. Assistance Division should continue to serve only as
91. an advisory board to county tax offices. We support
92. legislation eliminating expensive requirements of
93. the Property Tax Assistance Division that affect ap-
94. praisal districts and favor the 3/4 jurisdiction rule
95. assuring rural areas adequate representation. We
96. support imposing a spending limit on appraisal to 1/2
97. of 1 percent of the total tax collected from all taxing
98. entities in the district the previous year. Legisla-
99. tion should be passed to place the Central Appraisal
100. Districts under budgetary control of the county com-
101. missioner's court. The Central Appraisal District
102. should provide a worksheet reflecting changes in
103. valuation any time a taxpayer receives a notice of
104. value increase.

105. • elimination of the current unelected position of
106. County Chief Appraisal Officer and support the shift-
107. ing of the duties of the Chief Appraiser to the County
108. Tax Assessor/Collector which is an elected position.

109. • amending existing legislation to provide for
110. the public election of at least one member of each
111. Appraisal Review Board in each appraisal district.

112. • legislation that would require any taxing entity
113. to be subject to a rollback if, by either raising the tax
114. rate or raising property values, or a combination of
115. the two, the amount increased exceeds 8 percent.
116. We support lowering the current rollback rate of 8
117. percent.

118. • Timber Price Trends publication used by county
119. appraisal districts for property tax calculations con-
120. tain figures representing at least fifty percent (50 per-
121. cent) of all timber sales, including gatewood prices.

122. • modifying the methodology used in calculating
123. the annual growth of timber to reflect a value that is
124. a more reasonable projected rate of growth.

125. • the legislation that holds timber land appraisal
126. to no more than the projected growth of timber. For
127. property tax purposes, areas that have been con-
128. verted to pine plantations and replanted timberland
129. should be valuated as unimproved open pasture land
130. for the first 15 years.

131. • legislation that would prohibit local taxing agen-
132. cies and appraisal districts from assessing the mar-
133. ket value of property on the basis of speculative and
134. theoretical values for subdivision or resort property,
135. and taxing agencies and appraisal districts should
136. be required to use a lower realistic value. Taxing

137. entities and appraisal districts should provide a list
138. of improvements and/or attributes of the properties
139. used for establishing comparative value.
140. • any charitable organization having income pro-
141. ducing property to be taxed for that property. Any
142. governmental entity or any other tax-free organiza-
143. tion, except houses of worship, as defined by the U.S.
144. Tax Code, acquiring land or property should not be
145. allowed to remove it from its tax roll. The places of
146. worship of churches should be tax-exempt, but all
147. other church-owned revenue-producing properties
148. should be taxed.
149. • state law which allows tax free housing be
150. amended to provide for taxes to be paid to local tax-
151. ing entities on those projects.
152. • volunteer fire departments being exempt from
153. taxes.
154. • only real property owners should be eligible to
155. vote in bond or property tax elections. These prop-
156. erty owners should be permitted to vote in bond or
157. property tax elections in the voting district in which
158. their property is located, even though this location
159. is not the location of their residence.
160. • legislation which precludes election, appoint-
161. ment, or incumbency to any public office of any indi-
162. vidual who is delinquent in property tax payments.
163. • reappraising property every three years instead
164. of annually.
165. • exempting agricultural land from the higher
166. productive value appraisal at which land registered
167. with TPWD is taxed.
168. • legislation which clearly defines “Ecological
169. Laboratories” in the tax code in order to provide
170. meaningful guidelines to judge the legitimacy of ap-
171. plications for this status.
172. • appraisal districts refunding mistakes in assess-
173. ments that run for multiple years up to a maximum
174. of five years, and the removal of judgment error im-
175. munities from statutes.
176. • an appraisal system which values minerals
177. based on actual value and that is more responsive
178. to movements in the market.
179. • an amendment to 23.175 a, b, c, tax statute
180. that delays the initial ad valorem property tax of
181. the mineral gas pool values for 12 months and also
182. provides a methodology to adjust incorrect valuations,
183. overpayments and refunds.
184. • appraisal districts with mineral valuations to
185. inform royalty owners of the appraisal methodology
186. utilized on gas wells prior to the owners meeting with
187. the appraisal staff.
188. • improvement valuations to farm or ranch acre-
189. age such as wind turbines, mineral development or
190. other commercial development to revert to ag valu-
191. ation if the development is abandoned.
192. • reduction of time required for attaining agri-

193. culture or open space valuation on land acquired for
194. agriculture use purposes.

- 195. • tightening requirements to qualify for wildlife
- 196. management valuation.
- 197. • the Texas Parks and Wildlife working with the
- 198. Comptroller's Office to clearly define requirements for
- 199. Wildlife Co-ops/Wildlife Management Associations.
- 200. • appraisal districts' policies that assess stocking
- 201. rates required for an agriculture valuation being
- 202. determined by the productivity of the property not
- 203. acreage alone.
- 204. • land purchased or managed solely for environ-
- 205. mental conservation, water stewardship, or water
- 206. production purposes being assessed on current
- 207. market value.
- 208. • monitoring and working closely with the State
- 209. Comptroller's Office to assure that more accurate
- 210. data is used in determining hunting lease income and
- 211. expense factors as well as cash lease values, rather
- 212. than the information presently gathered from sources
- 213. such as Parks and Wildlife, FSA, NRCS and the Ex-
- 214. tension. Such data can be obtained at the local level
- 215. by the Chief Appraiser and the County Agricultural
- 216. Advisory Committee.
- 217. • the comptroller's office accepting local actual ag-
- 218. ricultural production data (income and expense from
- 219. producing crops and livestock) from each appraisal
- 220. district when valuating agricultural land, especially
- 221. when the data can be substantiated.
- 222. • all production expenses being considered in
- 223. valuation formulas using a ten year average.
- 224. • persons evaluating farm property having knowl-
- 225. edge and experience in agricultural land valuation.
- 226. • appraisal boards appointing appraisal review
- 227. boards with equal rural representation.
- 228. • appraisers meeting the following standards:
- 229. 1. All Appraisers in an appraisal district shall be
- 230. licensed by the State of Texas.
- 231. 2. A person seeking certification shall take classes
- 232. at any college offering the appropriate classes.
- 233. 3. Passing the State exam shall certify the ap-
- 234. praiser.
- 235. 4. No internship shall be required.
- 236. • property that has not changed ownership or
- 237. type of ag usage only requiring the owners signature
- 238. for recertification for ag valuation with the Central
- 239. Appraisal District.
- 240. • Farm Services Agency (FSA) certification report
- 241. being accepted for ag use certification when property
- 242. has changed ownership or type of ag use.
- 243. • appraisal districts valuing water wells and
- 244. septic tanks as part of existing improvements and
- 245. not as additional value on properties.
- 246. • appraisal district employees entering private
- 247. property to make accurate appraisals but, we oppose
- 248. the practice of appraisal district employees making

249. appraisals without the landowner's actual knowledge.
250. Employees of appraisal districts will obey the Texas
251. trespass law. Any taxing authority that enters any
252. property should have properly identified vehicles and
253. name badges and notify owners of property prior to
254. entering.
255. • school districts continuing to be reimbursed for
256. state mandated exemptions on a dollar-for-dollar
257. basis.
258. • cities buying property for municipal use or for
259. lakes outside their own county being required to pay
260. all taxes that would have gone to the county where
261. the property is located.
262. • cities building reservoirs to provide a water
263. supply being forced to pay county and school taxes
264. on land inundated where such land, at the time ac-
265. quired, was covered by bonded indebtedness to the
266. extent necessary to retire their proportionate share
267. of the bonded indebtedness.
268. • any property held solely for investment or
269. speculation by any political subdivision of the state
270. or state agency, being required to pay a fee equal to
271. all applicable property taxes.
272. • the appraisal district posting in the local paper
273. the average increase in value if the county's property
274. values have gone up, to show a real increase in taxes.
275. • a property owner that prevails in court against
276. a taxing entity in a property valuation dispute being
277. entitled to recover all expenses incurred in associa-
278. tion with the lawsuit, plus compensatory damages,
279. if applicable.
280. • the Texas Property Tax Assistance Division of
281. the Comptroller developing more precise appraisal
282. guidelines for the valuation of manufactured homes
283. for property tax purposes.
284. • legislation that would require taxing and tax
285. collecting entities to send receipts by mail to those
286. who pay by mail. Taxing entities which do not send
287. receipts for taxes paid through the mail should be
288. prohibited by law from foreclosing on property for
289. non-payment of taxes.
290. • Texas Property Tax Exemption for Surviving
291. Spouses of Disabled Veterans.
292. We oppose:
293. • the inclusion of crop insurance payments when
294. calculating ag value.
295. • two tier tax for homes and other property.
296. • any tax on personal property.
297. • mandatory listing on county tax rolls of any per-
298. sonal property used in the production of agricultural
299. commodities.
300. • taxation of unmined or unproduced coal and
301. other minerals.
302. • subjective and/or unrealistically high values
303. (such as views, possible building sites/development,
304. etc.) being used to set the appraised value of property.

305. • clearing of cedar, ashe juniper, and removing
306. dead oak wilt, or the installation of a rainwater
307. collection system being the basis for increasing the
308. appraised values of land by appraisal districts.
309. • the Property Tax Assistance Division setting
310. out hunting lease income as a separate line item in
311. determining agriculture income.
312. • farms that border public roads or highways being
313. taxed from the center of the roadway. In some cases,
314. easements to widen rights-of-way were given by
315. owners without compensation. The farm tax bound-
316. ary should be at the road or highway right-of-way
317. and mineral rights should go with the farm from the
318. center of the road.
319. • the state or appraisal districts being allowed
320. to increase value on property with agriculture or
321. open space land valuation, including property under
322. wildlife management, by changing the calculation
323. methods or caps. All property should be individu-
324. ally assessed to ensure equal valuation. Adjoining
325. properties should be compared to like properties and
326. should not be assumed to have the identical value of
327. a neighboring property.
328. • any state agency setting property tax values
329. higher than a school district's local values if the
330. district is in a uniform county valuation unit, as this
331. results in lowering the state funding of the school
332. district.
333. • all river authorities having the powers of taxa-
334. tion.
335. • any tax being imposed on the seventeen (17)
336. counties in the Trinity River Basin for the purpose
337. of construction or maintenance of the Trinity Canal.
338. • the taxing entities being allowed to foreclose on
339. property because of nonpayment of minimum taxes,
340. if the entity fails to send tax statements. For taxing
341. districts and entities, if it is the entities fault for
342. not notifying the landowner of record that taxes are
343. due, then any penalties, collection fees, and interest
344. should be waived.
345. During a declared drought or other natural
346. disaster, selling of livestock, or discontinuance of
347. hay, grain, fiber or nut production, or receipt of crop
348. insurance payments shall not result in the loss or
349. change of ag valuation status for a period of five (5)
350. years following the end of the declared drought, or
351. other natural disaster.
352. The intent of the open space legislation is being
353. abused by granting open space valuation to unquali-
354. fied tracts of land. In order to qualify for agriculture
355. valuation, Wildlife Management acreage must meet
356. 4 of 7 management objectives.
357. We oppose mandatory disclosure of sales price of
358. real estate transactions.

1. We support:
2. • the Legislature exempting from state sales tax
3. material used in construction of new agricultural
4. barns or material used for remodeling or repairing
5. of such existing barns used for storage of feed or
6. machinery.
7. • the State Sales Tax Exemption of agricultural
8. precision services, subscriptions and agriculture
9. equipment when used exclusively for agricultural
10. purposes. All exemptions should require a Texas
11. Agriculture or Timber Registration number.
12. • exempting from sales tax recreational income
13. on agricultural land.
14. • those claiming agricultural exemptions be
15. issued a number from the Comptroller's office to be
16. placed on purchase invoices. The Comptroller's office
17. should take action against businesses which refuse
18. to honor sales tax exemptions for items purchased
19. for agricultural use.
20. • exempting the tax on the resale of a vehicle on
21. which the state sales tax was paid when purchased
22. new.
23. • all exempting taxes on fuels and lubricants used
24. for agricultural purposes.
25. • up to one cent per gallon sales tax on fuels to be
26. returned to the respective counties for county road
27. improvement. The present motor fuel tax refund for
28. non-highway uses should be maintained. We support
29. a tax exemption for clear diesel purchased for off-road
30. use. All fuel tax money should be spent on roads
31. rather than being put in a general fund for other
32. purposes. There should be no tax on vehicle miles
33. traveled as a means of funding new road construction.
34. • repeal of the state inheritance tax. If the estate
35. tax is not repealed, we support the use of Ag Use/
36. Open Space valuation in calculating the estate tax.
37. In order to preserve private property rights and to
38. facilitate transfer of estates to legal heirs without
39. unreasonable expenses, we favor amending Texas
40. probate laws to simplify the probate process and to
41. reduce the excessive legal fees involved. We recom-
42. mend the value of agricultural property be valued at
43. the ag valuation used to calculate ad valorem taxes.
44. • the Texas Legislature allocating the Severance
45. Tax collected on every barrel of oil or condensate
46. produced and sold in Texas as follows: 25 percent
47. to the Permanent School Fund, 25 percent to be
48. divided between TXDOT districts and the counties
49. from where the Severance Tax was derived, and 50
50. percent to the Economic Stabilization Fund (Rainy
51. Day Fund). TXDOT and the counties will utilize their
52. respective funds to repair the roads being destroyed
53. by the drilling and production activity.
54. • a refinery tax on petroleum or petroleum prod-
55. ucts, provided that revenue is used only for financing

56. public school education in Texas with a corresponding
57. reduction in the allowed ceiling of property taxes.
58. • the Attorney General’s office rendering an opin-
59. ion regarding the purchase of unexpired contracts of
60. persons paid with tax funds and enabling employers
61. to place these persons in other positions.
62. • a truth in taxation statement from all taxing
63. entities to end misleading statements from the press.
64. • amending state law to allow an increase of the
65. county sales tax cap to 1%. Increases must be ap-
66. proved by a county referendum.
67. • the use of sales tax receipts by community
68. economic development corporations to develop and
69. encourage businesses that will process or add value
70. to agricultural products.
71. • a reasonable increase or indexing of dedicated
72. fuel taxes for construction and improvement of non-
73. toll roads.
74. • Volunteer Fire Departments receiving a tax
75. rebate on fuel.
76. • tax rebates and/or payments to school districts
77. and/or counties for land taken off of the tax rolls by
78. government mandate.
79. • any increase in the state gasoline tax being at
80. least partially allocated to county commissioners
81. courts for the purchase of rights-of-way for roads,
82. because of the importance of farm-to-market roads
83. to rural residents and to agriculture in general. Cit-
84. ies needing additional funds for roads, highways, or
85. other similar improvements should not be permitted
86. to utilize revenues generated by increased motor
87. vehicle fuel taxes for these purposes. Such funds
88. should come instead from city vehicle taxes imposed
89. within the city limits.
90. • a proportional share of the tax on aviation fuel
91. being used to repair airports in counties where the
92. tax is paid.
93. • payments to municipalities or entities benefiting
94. from construction of water infrastructure being paid
95. for through sales tax or fees on water and wastewater
96. service.
97. • an increase in local sales tax to finance water
98. projects and for incentives to mitigate harm to en-
99. dangered species.
100. • all public entities handling tax money being
101. required to publish their annual budget requests in
102. column form in their local newspapers.
103. • a public referendum being permitted to roll back
104. any tax increase by any entity.
105. • the people’s right to an election by roll back
106. petition when property tax rate increases exceed 8%.
107. • voters having the right of “recall vote” when the
108. Texas Legislature increases our tax burden.
109. • a resolution preventing a taxing entity from is-
110. suing any type of indebteding instruments that would
111. extend beyond the current operating year without a

112. public referendum.
113. • legislation allowing a property owner to vote
114. on bond and tax issues in every political subdivision
115. where he/she owns taxed property.
116. • exempting rural cemeteries from mineral taxa-
117. tion.
118. We oppose:
119. • a punitive tax or any consumption restrictions
120. on carbonated sweetened beverages, food, or consum-
121. ables containing agricultural products regardless of
122. size.
123. • a medical tax on hospital bills to go to a state
124. fund for allocation to hospitals to defray indigent
125. care costs.
126. • the collection of exempt taxes and the subse-
127. quent application of taxes for refund of bonding, in
128. order to bypass the refund application.
129. • legislation that would eliminate any of the coun-
130. ties portions of funds from road use, such as road
131. assumption, vehicle registration fee and school funds.
132. • any taxing entity using tax dollars dedicated to
133. a specific purpose for any other purpose without a
134. public referendum.
135. • taxation being used as a method of regulating
136. energy use or of implementing EPA standards.
137. • Legislature allowing taxing entities in the State
138. to grant tax abatements.
139. • sales tax on the sale of seeds and annual plants,
140. the products of which constitute food for human
141. consumption.
142. The Subchapter S Corporation is a tool for estate
143. planning and should not have to carry the burden
144. of a franchise tax, since all assets and profits of the
145. Subchapter S Corporation are taxed as individual
146. proprietorships. We propose that all family corpora-
147. tions which derive more than 50% of their earned
148. income from agricultural production be exempt from
149. any franchise and margins tax because farm or agri-
150. culture production income is unable to pass on any
151. tax expense. Retained earnings, also referred to as
152. earned surplus, should be deleted for franchise tax
153. purposes. We oppose any unemployment taxation on
154. an owner-manager of a Subchapter S corporation.
155. We oppose the establishment of Tax Reinvestment
156. Zones (TRZ) unless it is approved through a majority
157. vote of all property owners located within the taxing
158. entity. Prior to a vote, all property owners within
159. the taxing entity should be given advanced written
160. notification by mail of proposed TRZ and its purpose
161. as well as dates of all related hearings and meetings
162. discussing the proposed TRZ.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Energy and Fuels

142

1. We support:
2. • the use of nuclear energy as a dependable, eco-
3. nomical and safe source of power.
4. • fully developing fusion nuclear power.
5. • reinstitution of the nuclear breeder reactor pro-
6. gram to provide energy from nuclear waste.
7. • efforts to establish the infrastructure to provide
8. natural gas to all motorized vehicles.
9. • appropriate agencies of state government estab-
10. lishing a high priority for agricultural use of fossil
11. fuels to ensure necessary production of agricultural
12. commodities.
13. • trash and garbage be recycled or used as energy
14. where possible.
15. • the repeal of the regulation against a second
16. liquid draw line on LP gas motor fuel tanks.
17. We oppose:
18. • the processing, reprocessing and the production
19. of mixed oxide fuel (MOX) in areas where there is
20. possibility or risk of pollution and contamination of
21. agricultural land, air and groundwater.
22. • any mandatory regulations or fees with the reg-
23. istration or monitoring of above ground fuel storage
24. for farm use.

Renewable Energy

143

1. We support:
2. • legislation encouraging renewable energy.
3. • exempting fuel alcohol from state taxes.
4. • eliminating the fuel alcohol percentage require-
5. ments in gasoline.
6. • increased research and development of alter-
7. native fuels using agricultural products and by-
8. products.
9. • farm-based renewable energy from wind, solar,
10. geothermal, and biomass sources.
11. • photosynthesis research to help better under-
12. stand how solar energy can be converted into electri-
13. cal energy.
14. • legislation and interpretation of present envi-
15. ronmental law that would classify biofuels (biodiesel,
16. ethanol, and biomass electrical generation) as “green
17. fuel.”
18. • better incentives for the production of renew-
19. able energy use.
20. • exempting fuel or energy derived from agricul-
21. ture products and by-products from taxation.
22. • legislation requiring ethanol blends to be used
23. where air quality violations exist.
24. • the creation of a renewable fuel producer as-
25. sessment fund (assessed on each gallon of ethanol
26. or biodiesel produced) to be matched with funds

27. from the State of Texas fuel, ethanol and biodiesel
28. production account.
29. • the establishment of self-help programs with
30. oversight and administration by the TDA or the Texas
31. A&M AgriLife Extension Service.
32. • legislation that would give landowners in the
33. State of Texas all geothermal energy rights.
34. • new transmission infrastructure for electricity
35. generated from renewable energy sources.
36. • lighting requirements for all temporary test tow-
37. ers for wind generation of electrical power.
38. • allowing landowners to lease and reserve wind
39. interests.
40. • the Public Utility Commission having oversight
41. and bonding authority for the siting and decommis-
42. sioning of wind turbines.
43. • electric companies' efforts to assist with infor-
44. mation and source contracts for construction and
45. installation of sun or wind energy units that will
46. provide excess energy to be transmitted back to the
47. electric company.
48. We oppose:
49. • requiring fuel alcohol to be denatured if it is
50. contaminated during manufacture to the extent that
51. it is unfit for human consumption.
52. • classifying carbon released from energy genera-
53. tion by biofuels as a pollutant.

Utilities

144

1. We support:
2. • the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) members
3. be initially appointed by the Governor for a term of
4. four years and subsequently required to run for elec-
5. tion after one term.
6. • a constitutional amendment prohibiting a public
7. utility from passing on to consumers and landowners
8. the costs of expansions and improvements, within
9. reasonable limits.
10. • the following areas of the PUC policies that are
11. currently administrative be enacted by the Texas
12. Legislature to become law:
13. 1. The only hearings held in Austin should be the
14. hearings before the PUC.
15. 2. All public meetings mandated by law for new or
16. increased capacity of any facilities or lines be subject
17. to the Open Meetings Act. The County Judge of the
18. affected county should act as the presiding officer.
19. 3. The County Judge in affected counties should
20. hold administrative hearings on matters of new or
21. alternative structures and/or easement changes.
22. 4. Distances of transmission lines to inhabited
23. structures.
24. 5. A Special Office of Property Owners Advocacy
25. should be created and administrated by the legisla-
26. ture and funded by stockholder-owned utilities.

27. 6. Annual royalty payment should be arrived at
28. in conjunction with damages and initial easement
29. purchase. They should be considered as property
30. that can be passed from landowner to landowner.
31. 7. Utility companies should pay overcharge re-
32. bates within twelve months.
33. 8. Utility companies “take or pay” provision should
34. be prohibited.
35. • expansion of the acceptable uses of the Texas
36. Universal Service Fee to include expanding and
37. improving broadband internet service in rural areas
38. of Texas.
39. • the wholesale competition provisions of the
40. Public Utility Regulatory Act of 1995.
41. • allowing any deregulation of public utilities only
42. if access to affordable and reliable service by rural
43. users is maintained.
93. • exempting from regulation transporting compa-
94. nies who sell natural gas for agricultural purposes
95. only, and who do not sell or deliver natural gas to
96. urban areas.
97. • action being taken by the Texas Public Utilities
98. Commission to investigate and work toward a resolu-
99. tion of the problems of rural telephone service and
100. rural electric service.
101. • revocation of any service area granted to a
102. telephone company if the entire area is not supplied
103. telephone service within two years, or allowing other
104. telephone companies to cross area boundaries to
105. provide the needed service.
106. • amending laws regulating public utilities to
107. provide for competition within a given franchise when
108. the first five years of that franchise shows a 300%
109. business increase.
110. • the Public Utilities Commission granting only
111. those increases in telephone rates that can be justi-
112. fied.
113. • efforts being made to lower intrastate long dis-
114. tance telephone rates to make them more compatible
115. with interstate rates.
116. • the Communications Act of 1934.
117. • keeping the “access charge” for rural telephone
118. co-op and oppose the “bill & keep” concept.
119. • amending the Texas statutes under which the
120. electric cooperatives and rural utilities operate to
121. provide:
122. 1. That an electric cooperative and/or rural util-
123. ity cannot sell all or a major segment of its property
124. without the approval of a majority of its members.
125. 2. That the by-laws of an electric cooperative and/
126. or rural utility can only be amended by the members.
127. 3. That electric cooperatives and/or rural utilities
128. have equal rights with any electric power supplier
129. in rural areas.
130. 4. That electric cooperatives retain the right to
131. serve certified areas assigned to them by the Public

132. Utilities Commission. The right to provide services
133. to these areas should be the sole right of the Board
134. of Directors of the co-op.
135. 5. That cooperatives be permitted to assess a pen-
136. alty charge to utility customers who are delinquent
137. in paying their utility bills.
138. • legislation which holds a utility company liable
139. for any damage caused by the company or its contrac-
140. tor entering private property.
141. • utility companies carrying a performance bond
142. in order to restore a landowner's property to its previ-
143. ous state. The bond should be increased annually to
144. reflect the increased costs of restoration.
145. • the Texas Legislature passing laws requiring
146. utility companies to follow existing rights-of-way,
147. where possible, with all utility lines. If not, then
148. follow established fence lines.
149. • legislative measures that would allow land-
150. owners to have the opportunity to negotiate utility
151. right-of-way easements based either on a monthly,
152. annually, or one-time payment option.
153. • requiring TV cable providers to provide the
154. same safety requirements in rural areas that electric
155. cooperatives and/or rural utilities are required to
156. provide, including safety shields on guide wires on
157. poles with anchors.
158. • legislation requiring removal of abandoned cable
159. TV and telephone cables in rural areas.
160. • enforcement of the uniform minimum height
161. code (22 feet) of all overhead wires over all roadways
162. to allow movement of farm machinery.
163. • installation of all new telephone lines under-
164. ground where feasible.
165. • labeling of any electrical devices containing any
166. toxic substance and being near any home site in such
167. a manner that the individuals near the devices are
168. aware of their contents or the landowner should be
169. notified of their contents.
170. • requiring utility companies to follow all state and
171. pesticide laws when using chemicals on rights-of-way.
172. • legislation giving authority to the Agriculture
173. and Consumer Protection Division of the Texas De-
174. partment of Agriculture to check the accuracy of the
175. natural gas master meters (agricultural use) within
176. the State of Texas as well as the BTU rating of the
177. natural gas so that all consumers within the state
178. can be assured of quantity and quality of the natural
179. gas for which they are paying.
180. • an interim study committee of legislators and
181. agricultural producers using natural gas for irriga-
182. tion to study the inconsistencies of natural gas prices,
183. billing procedures, and methods to notify natural gas
184. users of price prior to use.
185. • a tax on natural gas that leaves the State of
186. Texas.
187. • legislation giving agricultural producers who use

188. natural gas in their production the right to appeal
189. a rate increase.
- 190. • regulation of electrical energy to control the cost.
 - 191. • requiring utility companies to maintain their
 - 192. rights-of-way.
 - 193. • requiring utility and construction companies to
 - 194. stay within their easements during their work.
 - 195. • giving agriculture producers the right to appeal
 - 196. classifications of electrical meters as residential or
 - 197. commercial.
198. We oppose:
- 199. • exporting natural gas and oil out of the State of
 - 200. Texas for less than it is selling for in Texas.
 - 201. • any deregulation plan that infringes upon the
 - 202. responsibility of electric cooperatives to provide me-
 - 203. tering, billing and other services to their members.
 - 204. Any deregulation plan must be consistent with state
 - 205. and federal policies that encourage and support rural
 - 206. economic development.
 - 207. • public utilities declaring their gifts to charities
 - 208. as an expense when testifying before the PUC for
 - 209. rate increases.
 - 210. • rural users having to pay higher utility fees than
 - 211. comparable urban users.
 - 212. • “add-ons” and other assessments to utility bills.

Environmental Issues

145

1. We support:
- 2. • Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
 - 3. (TCEQ) being independent of the Environmental
 - 4. Protection Agency (EPA) in regulating environmental
 - 5. issues in Texas.
 - 6. • the Public Utility Commission and TCEQ adopt-
 - 7. ing incentives that would encourage utilities to use
 - 8. advanced clean coal technologies.
 - 9. • monitoring of ambient air quality in unclassified
 - 10. areas to determine a base line before any coal-fired
 - 11. power plants are permitted by TCEQ.
 - 12. • the rights of all citizens to complain to their
 - 13. regulatory agencies; however, we vigorously oppose
 - 14. the complainant’s abuse of privilege.
 - 15. • legislation to limit on-site inspections of the
 - 16. same nature by regulatory agencies to one complaint
 - 17. per annum. Thereafter, the complainant should pay
 - 18. for inspection costs incurred by the defendant and
 - 19. agencies for the same type complaint, unless the
 - 20. complaint proves to be a permit violation.
 - 21. • false accusation penalties for persons making a
 - 22. false complaint about chemical drift.
 - 23. • legislation that restricts environmental agency
 - 24. powers preventing unnecessary discrimination to-
 - 25. ward individuals and communities.
 - 26. • the confidentiality of all environmental audits
 - 27. requested by non-governmental institutions of real
 - 28. property. These audits should remain privileged
 - 29. information between the buyer, seller and lender.

- 30. • Texas anti-littering laws.
- 31. • a deposit on aluminum can and glass bottles to
- 32. reduce litter.
- 33. • the use of recycled and recyclable products
- 34. whenever financially feasible.
- 35. • the use of agricultural products in the production
- 36. of biodegradable products.
- 37. • legislation limiting TCEQ's ability to enforce,
- 38. restrict, and/or fine an entity for spilling, dropping,
- 39. or losing small amounts of petroleum products into
- 40. the environment during the normal everyday use of
- 41. agriculture equipment, tools, and lubricants.
- 42. • the use of prescribed burning as a valuable
- 43. agricultural management tool to manage vegetation
- 44. in Texas.
- 45. • a state-sponsored training program for pre-
- 46. scribed burning.
- 47. • the Texas program for Certification of Prescribed
- 48. Burn Managers.
- 49. • the use of prescribed burning during the county
- 50. burn bans provided the burn is conducted by a certi-
- 51. fied prescribed burn manager or other individual ap-
- 52. proved by the commissioners' court who has adequate
- 53. prescribed fire training.
- 54. • research and actions to provide accurate weather
- 55. forecasting and storm detection as a vital aid to farm-
- 56. ing and ranching activities.
- 57. • the setting of a maximum acceptable level of
- 58. salt water in the land as a result of oil and gas pro-
- 59. duction. This maximum level should not take into
- 60. consideration naturally occurring salt water levels.
- 61. • TCEQ replacing the Texas Railroad Commission
- 62. as having authority to investigate, remediate, and
- 63. take enforcement action against a person or entity
- 64. that exceeds the maximum acceptable level of salt
- 65. water due to oil and gas production.
- 66. • requiring mitigation land to be managed at the
- 67. highest practicable level.
- 68. • legislation requiring land controlled or moni-
- 69. tored by Texas Parks and Wildlife or any environmen-
- 70. tal/conservation group be maintained in a manner
- 71. which improves water conservation and diminishes
- 72. fire risks by reducing or removing excess under-
- 73. growth and thinning forest to an acceptable number
- 74. of trees per acre. Methods to accomplish these goals
- 75. may include prescribed burns, livestock grazing,
- 76. mechanical and chemical control.
- 77. • adequate protection for land owners who own
- 78. the surface rights without mineral rights.
- 79. • an in-depth agriculture impact study concerning
- 80. nuclear weapons assembly plants expansion.
- 81. We oppose:
- 82. • greenhouse gas emissions from energy usage or
- 83. from livestock being considered pollutants.
- 84. • TCEQ issuing permits for new coal-fired power
- 85. plants unless they consider incorporating Integrated

86. Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC) or advanced
87. combustion technologies along with latest pollu-
88. tion control technologies that meet or exceed EPA
89. requirements.

- 90. • a coal-fired power plant disposing pollutants in
91. areas that could harm ground or surface water even
92. if the plant is permitted with latest technology and
93. meets clean air standards.
- 94. • passage of legislation that would give any indi-
95. vidual or group the right to sue farmers, ranchers or
96. others in cases of claimed environmental pollution
97. where the person or persons bringing the suit are
98. not directly affected.
- 99. • an individual or entity moving into a farming or
100. agriculture production area having the right to sue
101. an agricultural producer because of dust, noise, odor,
102. or drift, so long as the property has been in produc-
103. tion prior to the new resident, individual or entity
104. moving in to the area.
- 105. • legislation, regulating or taxing “dust” in any
106. open-air agricultural operation.
- 107. • TCEQ’s Citizen Watch Program.
- 108. • any environmental assessments of rural rights-
109. of-way performed by or for public or private utility
110. companies, and the release of these assessments for
111. public review without the landowner’s prior written
112. consent.
- 113. • legislation limiting the handling, use and storage
114. of oils, oil filters, air filters, gas, diesel or any other
115. items needed to operate an agricultural enterprise.
- 116. • weather modification activities and research
117. being conducted with full public understanding and
118. recognition of possible effects to property in the area.

119. We recommend that before any weather modification
120. activities take place over any region, landowners of
121. that region be given the right to vote on this issue.

122. ***Uranium Mining:***

123. We support:

- 124. • TCEQ being the entity responsible for regulating
125. uranium exploration, mining, and restoration.
- 126. • due process permit proceedings and approval
127. by local commissioners court and groundwater
128. conservation districts before any permit is granted.
- 129. • groundwater baseline testing being required
130. before any significant exploration is allowed.
- 131. • confirmation of the suitability of an aquifer to
132. allow safe mining without the potential of harming
133. the groundwater prior to the issuance of any explora-
134. tion permits for in-situ uranium mining.
- 135. • continued monitoring of the aquifer until there
136. is no longer a danger of radioactivity.
- 137. • early warning detection wells placed no more
138. than 100 feet from the mine in addition to the already
139. mandated monitoring wells set at 200 feet.
- 140. • third party monitoring of the wells
- 141. • monitoring reports being sent to the local

142. groundwater conservation districts.
143. • indemnity funds being made available for use
144. by surrounding landowners outside the permit area
145. when such landowners are affected.
146. We oppose:
147. • in-situ uranium mining in a drinking water or
148. stock water aquifer.

Animal Species Generally 146

1. We support:
2. • farmers, ranchers, and appropriate state employ-
3. ees being able to use all effective methods of preda-
4. tor control, including the use of steel traps, aerial
5. hunting, chemical toxicants, and M-44s, to protect
6. livestock, wildlife, poultry and crops.
7. • a concerted statewide effort to retain present
8. laws allowing the taking of furbearing and other
9. non-game animals whose pelts may be of value, and
10. the shipment and sale of their pelts.
11. • classifying the mountain lion as a predator
12. rather than a game animal.
13. • efforts of state and federal agencies to improve
14. and practice control measures for destructive species
15. of predators, rodents, and pests.
16. • continued adequate funding for predator control,
17. which includes bounties for predators of perishable
18. crops.
19. • federal funding for the USDA Animal Damage
20. Control program and request that more of the ADC
21. funds be utilized at the field level to reduce some of
22. the burdensome administration.
23. • the state and federal government taking action
24. to prevent public lands, parks, military bases, and
25. other government-controlled land from becoming
26. safe havens for predators or any other agricultural
27. pest from which they can stage raids on nearby farms
28. and ranches.
29. • legislation making it a crime and a civil tort to re-
30. lease hogs or other destructive animals into the wild.
31. • state funding for any research or program includ-
32. ing the use of a bounty to control and/or eliminate
33. feral hogs.
34. • research on the adverse economic impact of
35. blackbirds, grackles, and other avian pests that leads
36. to their control and/or elimination in both agricul-
37. tural and non-agricultural areas.
38. • the Texas Department of Agriculture working
39. with chemical companies to obtain a chemical labeled
40. to control the “prairie crayfish.”
41. • any recovery program for endangered species
42. including but not limited to The Edwards Aquifer
43. Recovery Implementation Program which includes
44. landowner and/or producer incentives and avoids
45. any restrictions and punishment that would have
46. a financial impact on the private property owner,

47. including any fees or taxes.
48. • a landowner and/or producer operating private
49. property that is declared habitat for endangered spe-
50. cies should receive adequate annual reimbursement
51. for restrictions placed on the land.
52. • an economic impact study being made and its
53. results considered before declaring any endangered
54. species.
55. • the Texas State Comptroller Office being the
56. lead state agency with responsibility for endangered
57. species issues.
58. • requiring multiple agencies to be involved in any
59. scientific studies, planning, or permitting involving
60. candidate or listed endangered species.
61. • the right of landowners and/or producers or ten-
62. ants to protect themselves, their families, livestock
63. and properties from all predators, or invasive species,
64. including those listed in the Endangered Species Act.
65. • removal of all poisonous reptiles from any list
66. of threatened or endangered species.
67. • removal of the Black Vulture “*Coragyps atratus*,”
68. from the protected status of the Texas Parks and
69. Wildlife Department.
70. • the right of producers to protect their livestock
71. from vultures without reprisal from state or federal
72. regulatory agencies.
73. • legislation to save the Texas oyster industry and
74. to protect public health.
75. • legislation allowing pet owners to buy the vac-
76. cine and vaccinate their own pets for rabies.
77. • best management practices of evaluating the
78. populations of endangered species or candidate
79. species.
80. We oppose:
81. • confiscation of air vehicles of coyote hunters for
82. minor violations.
83. • the introduction of any species into any area
84. that could cause detriment to agriculture.
85. • legislation or regulation establishing the clas-
86. sification of feral hogs as “game.”
87. • legislation that would prohibit or restrict the use
88. of dogs as a means of trailing, hunting and/or elimi-
89. nation of feral hogs, provided the permission of the
90. landowner or landowner s agent has been obtained.
91. • Texas Parks and Wildlife Department being al-
92. lowed to request listing of any species as endangered
93. species.

Animal Welfare

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1. We support the humane treatment of all animals.
2. We oppose any change to the current animal
3. cruelty laws or licensing that adversely impacts the
4. normally accepted practices or handling of animals.

1. We support:
2. • stronger action through legislation, regulation
3. or otherwise to provide maximum protection for land
4. and water property rights of farmers and ranchers
5. and other landowners in Texas.
6. • legislation to deny public access to navigable in
7. statute rivers, creeks, and streams located within the
8. boundaries of privately held lands. We oppose public
9. use of streambeds located within the boundaries of
10. privately held lands that are navigable by statute,
11. but not navigable in fact.
12. • the right of landowners to sell the development
13. rights, including conservation easements.
14. • a landowner having the option of selling develop-
15. ment rights or an easement versus the loss of title
16. through eminent domain for mitigation purposes.
17. • fair compensation for an agricultural producer if
18. that agricultural producer loses income, productivity
19. and/or the right to own or use property, or property
20. value due to these activities or regulation.
21. • the right of property owners to erect and main-
22. tain billboards.
23. • the current law protecting the right-to-farm and
24. any reasonable changes which strengthen it.
25. • the immediate cessation of state government
26. agencies purchasing real estate from non-profit or-
27. ganizations at a profit to those organizations.
28. • the removal of tax exempt status for non-profit
29. organizations and require payment of taxes at the
30. appropriate rate when real estate purchased by these
31. groups with tax-exempt dollars is transferred or sold
32. to a government body rather than being donated.
33. • no net loss in private land ownership.
34. • legislation that would grant ownership to the
35. current owner or adjacent owner of abandoned state
36. and county rights-of-way, or abandoned railroad
37. rights-of-way.
38. • the requirement that any governmental agency,
39. or other entity, which establishes a hike and bike
40. trail, ensures protection of adjoining landowners
41. through construction and maintenance of adequate
42. fences and protection from liability issues related to
43. the use of such facilities.
44. • allowing all landowners in Texas to have the
45. option of maintaining a fireguard within boundaries
46. of highway rights-of-way and railroad rights-of-way
47. next to their property.
48. • limitations on rights-of-way permits and ease-
49. ments requiring that the right be exercised within
50. 5 years.
51. • requiring public utility companies to use existing
52. rights-of-way where possible.
53. • strict enforcement to prevent trespassing on
54. private property.
55. • relief from liability for property owners and

56. lessees for injuries to trespassers on their property,
57. whether their property is posted or not.
58. • classifying the unauthorized landing of hot air
59. balloons on private property as illegal.
60. • holding all aircraft operators, including military,
61. liable for all damage to livestock and property caused
62. by over flight of the aircraft.
63. • establishing a minimum flight altitude to ensure
64. safety of livestock.
65. • landowners being able to forcefully remove non-
66. military drones in flight over an owner's land without
67. notice to the operator if the drone is endangering
68. livestock or property.
69. • legislation that makes trespassing below the
70. surface of land as well as on the surface of land illegal.
71. • legislation that would exempt all property own-
72. ers from liability for damages or injuries from wild-
73. life, including Africanized Bees, on private property.
74. • legislation to reduce, limit or eliminate the li-
75. ability on agricultural and/or agritourism operations
76. due to the inherent risks of those operations.
77. • agri-tourism which includes, but is not limited
78. to: corn mazes, educational farm tours, choose-and-
79. cut Christmas trees, farm animal exhibits or petting
80. corrals, hay rides, bed and breakfasts, on-farm event
81. hosting, on-farm retail markets, pick-your-own fruits
82. and vegetables, winery tours and wine tasting.
83. • a landowner's right of ownership to artifacts as-
84. sociated with archeological and historic sites, when
85. they occur on private land.
86. • the right of property owners to use their property
87. for whatever purpose within the law.
88. • the right of property owners to sell, lease, or
89. donate all or any part of their property.
90. • requiring any buffer around the perimeter of
91. military bases, designed to keep land in production
92. agriculture, be clearly focused on that purpose alone.
93. • any agreements between the military, or its
94. agents, and landowners to be by lease or contract
95. rather than easement, and in terms of years, not
96. perpetuity.
97. • amending Texas probate laws to simplify the pro-
98. bate and to reduce the excessive legal fees involved
99. to preserve private property rights and facilitate
100. transfer of estates to legal heirs without unreason-
101. able expense.
102. • legislation that will provide a remedy for prop-
103. erty owners who have been victimized by erroneous or
104. improper appraisals in inheritance tax and land con-
105. demnation cases that will include a course of action
106. within civil law against such appraisers, including
107. the awarding of compensatory and punitive damages.
108. • state tenancy laws that provide lessees rights of
109. fair treatment but that maintain the property rights
110. of landowners.
111. • legislation which would prevent foreign owner-

112. ship of agricultural land, production units, process-
113. ing plants and/or warehouses which would result in
114. unequal and unfair foreign trade advantages.
115. • a requirement for foreign landowners to pay the
116. same taxes required of citizens.
117. • landowners being able to own property to the
118. center of a creek if they hold an appropriate deed.
119. • limiting the Texas Parks and Wildlife Depart-
120. ment s authority for acquisition of agricultural land
121. to voluntary purchases without the use of condemna-
122. tion, and with authorization from the Legislature.
123. • a property owner’s right to utilize resources to
124. preserve environmentally sensitive ecosystems from
125. development.
126. • encouraging the use of Texas Parks and Wildlife
127. and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife expertise, but it should
128. not be required.
129. • current law that provides landowners with safe-
130. guards under the development of regional habitat
131. conservation plans.
132. • any reasonable changes to strengthen the cur-
133. rent law to benefit private property rights.
134. • requiring highway departments, utility com-
135. panies, local, state and federal governments that
136. damage property to notify property owners within 24
137. hours, post a guard on all fence damage until repairs
138. can be accomplished, and to settle claims within 30
139. days of occurrence.
140. • legislation giving the Texas Legislature au-
141. thority to clear up land vacancy issues relieving the
142. property owner from the burden of proof of ownership.
143. • requiring vacancy applicants to assume all
144. expenses related to proving a vacancy, including ex-
145. penses of all parties in an unsuccessful application.
146. • legislation that a vacancy be awarded to the
147. party(s) without charge and no compensation to the
148. “discoverer/finder” in cases where there is “Vacant
149. Land” (unsurveyed, unsold public school land) and
150. the land is held by a “good-faith” party.
151. • divesting occupied land and unoccupied land
152. without title as required by the Texas General Land
153. Office.
154. • landowners, who as good-faith claimants have
155. purchased title and paid taxes on land, having prior-
156. ity standing in ownership disputes between parties,
157. including state or federal governments.
158. • the establishment of reasonable property line
159. setbacks for industrial wind farms by the Public
160. Utilities Commission, utilizing input from accred-
161. ited organizations and approval by property owners’
162. coalition.
163. • requiring the entity requesting a Dig Test to
164. notify the landowner/operator at least 48 hours prior
165. to digging/excavation.

166. We oppose:
167. • the recreational use of motor driven land conveyance vehicles on or in any public stream or public stream bed in the State of Texas.
169. • any waters of the State of Texas being designated for any purpose that would adversely affect a landowner, including the American Heritage Rivers Initiative.
173. • any state or federal money being spent on the American Heritage Rivers Initiative.
176. • State and Federal Government efforts to expand the San Bernard Bottom Lands Project on farm and ranch land located in Brazoria, Matagorda, Wharton, and Fort Bend counties.
180. • any activity or regulation by governmental or non-governmental entities that will interfere with the rights and control of private property.
183. • any legislation that assesses adjacent landowners for cost of any road construction.
185. • the use of inactive rail beds as hike and bike trails.
187. • public access to private land, including historic or archeological sites, except when specific permission is granted by the landowner.
190. • the use of advanced technologies to collect surface and subsurface data without landowner consent, including all aircraft and drones.
193. • burdensome and unnecessary state and/or federal agency regulation of privately owned unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) while being used as an aid for agricultural purposes with landowner, and/or tenant authorization.
198. • the use of drones over private property without permission from the land owner, or tenant, except in the case of a public emergency or court order.

Eminent Domain

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1. We support:
2. • landowners being compensated for the value of the natural resources, if the property is being condemned to acquire those natural resources.
5. • a constitutional amendment prohibiting the use of eminent domain to take private property for economic development purposes, unless it contains unacceptable provisions.
9. • additional protection for the private property rights of landowners when eminent domain is used to acquire property.
12. • legislation requiring those exercising eminent domain to make a good faith offer.
14. • requiring the condemning authority to pay attorney fees, appraisal fees, and related costs whenever the offer is challenged and the amount awarded exceeds the initial offer.
18. • adequate time being given to a landowner to

19. allow a satisfactory relocation.

20. • a governmental review to determine the number

21. and kinds of entities that have the right to exercise

22. eminent domain and this review be made available to

23. the public. We encourage the Legislature to consider

24. limiting the number of entities with these powers.

25. • state legislation that would require proper and

26. sufficient notice when legislation is filed that could

27. conceivably grant eminent domain powers.

28. • entities that have eminent domain authority

29. being required to go under sunset review.

30. • having at least two owners of agricultural or

31. open-space land represented on all condemnation

32. courts when agricultural or open-space land is being

33. condemned.

34. • legislation that would provide more adequate

35. compensation to owners of property condemned and

36. taken, including the option of participation or royalty

37. payments and for property rendered less valuable

38. as a result of property being divided, or adjacent

39. property taken in condemnation.

40. • additional annual compensation for a landowner

41. based on its potential revenue produced from addi-

42. tional use of an easement.

43. • an entitlement to landowners that would share

44. in the revenue produced on property lost by condem-

45. nation or easement.

46. • actions requiring that pipeline or utility ease-

47. ments have a minimum content of landowner protec-

48. tions in the initial offer.

49. • the landowner having the option of a lump sum

50. payment and/or annual lease throughout the produc-

51. tion period.

52. • appraisals on condemned land being made public

53. information, so the people involved can be assured

54. of obtaining fair and equitable prices for their land.

55. • property being acquired through condemnation

56. for a stated purpose but not used for that purpose

57. within a two (2) year period, or property which ceases

58. to be used for the specified purpose, being returned

59. to private ownership.

60. • giving the last owner or heirs the first option

61. to buy back condemned property at the original sale

62. price.

63. • legislation requiring complete satisfaction of

64. all financial responsibilities before any construction

65. commences on property or easements taken under

66. eminent domain.

67. • amendment of the existing Texas-enabling pro-

68. cess to require review and approval by the county

69. commissioner's court for all federal or state govern-

70. ment land purchases or exchanges.

71. • the reduction of state-owned land.

72. • requiring by law, that any entity acquiring land

73. by condemnation to replace in kind based on actual

74. replacement cost, subject to approval by the property

75. owner.

76. • limiting condemnation to only the surface estate
77. when the public purpose can be accomplished by only
78. acquiring the surface, with the minerals and water
79. rights remaining in the possession of the owner.
80. • legislation that would deny the power of emi-
81. nent domain and taxing authority to a development
82. district until a county-wide referendum has passed
83. in all the affected counties.
84. • Texas Railroad Commission (RRC) establishing
85. and strictly following a meaningful review process
86. of approving Common Carrier Permit applications
87. (currently known as T-4 Form).
88. • Texas Railroad Commission (RRC) verifying
89. information submitted by applicants to ensure those
90. entities accurately meet the legal standards for com-
91. mon carrier status.
92. • a landowner whose property may be or will be af-
93. fected by a pipeline or utility project receiving notice
94. by certified mail from any company with the power
95. of eminent domain when their land is identified as
96. a proposed route.
97. • a landowner whose property may be or will be
98. affected by a pipeline project having an opportunity
99. to challenge the common carrier status of any com-
100. pany with the power of eminent domain in a local
101. trial court of jurisdiction and local intermediate
102. appellate court.
103. • legislation that would require all entities with
104. the power to obtain property by the right of eminent
105. domain to have all required state and local permits
106. before the acquisition of property can begin.
107. We oppose:
108. • any agency of government using its power of
109. eminent domain without establishing positive proof
110. that there is an urgent and overriding public need for
111. the land that is more important than future produc-
112. tion of food and fiber, and that there is no alternative
113. to taking the land.
114. • using the power of eminent domain for recre-
115. ational, environmental or private business, or any
116. non-governmental purposes.
117. • statewide legislation which would grant the
118. power of eminent domain to any additional groups
119. or agencies.
120. • any unit of government holding an election af-
121. fecting the acquisition of rural property by condem-
122. nation prior to it having permitted voting by rural
123. and absentee property owner of voting age, if their
124. rural property may be acquired.
125. • easements being used for any purpose other
126. than the purpose for which it was originally agreed.
127. • the use of eminent domain to acquire land for
128. mitigation.
129. • the use of eminent domain to acquire agricul-
130. tural land for lakes from which the water is allocated
131. for municipal and industrial use only.

1. We support:
2. • measures which protect an owner's right to the
3. fullest development, production and benefits of min-
4. erals consistent with sound conservation practices.
5. • the Texas Railroad Commission regulating
6. state natural mineral resources, other than sand
7. and gravel.
8. • TCEQ having authority over all environmental
9. issues regarding extraction of minerals.
10. • legislation requiring state agencies to adopt new
11. practices to assure that land and mineral owners are
12. fully informed regarding hearings and orders on oil
13. and gas field rules, directives regarding pollution, and
14. other actions which directly affect mineral or surface
15. rights. These hearings should be held in the area
16. where the minerals in question are located, and that
17. appeals be heard in the nearest court of jurisdiction.
18. • requiring the Texas General Land Office to follow
19. Texas Railroad Commission rules and regulations
20. and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
21. recommendations concerning the oil and gas explora-
22. tions and production on state lands.
23. • the Texas Railroad Commission being respon-
24. sible for periodic inspection of casings on all produc-
25. ing wells, oil and gas pipelines, and waste disposal
26. and injection wells.
27. • pipeline carriers being required to adhere to
28. strict policies for checking and repairing leaks in
29. lines and valves as well as in replacing old lines and
30. installing new lines.
31. • the development of mineral and energy resources
32. on federal lands by private enterprises.
33. • legislation to provide the Texas Railroad Com-
34. mission Well I.D. Number as the one identifying
35. number for reference in all jurisdictional agencies
36. inclusive of the ad valorem taxing entities.
37. • legislation reducing the minimum withhold
38. payment from \$25.00 to \$10.00 in a calendar year.
39. • the Texas Railroad Commission Informal Com-
40. plaint Process as the FIRST ATTEMPT in resolving
41. any claim before hiring legal assistance for litigation.
42. We support legislation that allows the mineral owner,
43. when forced into litigation, to recover all reasonable
44. lawyer fees and court costs whenever a well operator
45. and payer are found in violation of Railroad Commis-
46. sion rules and the Texas Natural Resources Code.
47. • legislation that would provide the prevailing
48. litigant treble the award from Small Claims or J.P.
49. Court and treble reasonable lawyer fees and court
50. costs in a case where a mineral owner has prevailed
51. by favorable decision in Small Claims Court or J.P.
52. Court, then, having such favorable decision appealed
53. to a higher court.
54. • legislation that helps protect mineral owners
55. from fraudulent operators, by removing the statute

56. of limitations in the case of fraudulent activities.
57. • price information being plainly exhibited on any
58. payment detail and must accompany the payment.
59. • legislation requiring oil and gas production
60. royalty checks be paid on time in accordance with
61. the terms of respective leases.
62. • legislation providing a minimum damage pay-
63. ment to surface owners where a well may be drilled or
64. a pipeline installed, inclusive of any required surface
65. production equipment for the well and pipeline. Such
66. minimum damage payment should be paid within five
67. (5) working days of commencement of any excavation.
68. • minimum damage payments being made on a
69. per acre basis for the area excavated for a drilling rig
70. and on a by-the-foot basis for pipeline installation(s).
71. Where such minimum payment cannot be agreed
72. upon, then binding arbitration is preferred over
73. litigation; the parties sharing equally in the costs
74. of arbitration.
75. • legislation ensuring that mineral rights sepa-
76. rated from the surface rights return to the current
77. surface owner after 10 years unless the mineral
78. owner is known.
79. • all mineral and royalty rights withheld when
80. land is sold reverting to the surface owner if not
81. claimed within a specified amount of time after be-
82. ing recorded.
83. • all new land sales having a specified time limit
84. on withholding of minerals. After due process of law
85. has been executed to find mineral and royalty owners
86. who have executive rights with their minerals and
87. royalty, at this time the executive rights through
88. court hearing should be returned to the current
89. landowner and the unknown heirs share of proceeds
90. be put in escrow for them to claim.
91. • efforts to clear mineral ownership for certain
92. university fund land held in good faith under color
93. of title for at least 50 years.
94. • regulations from the Texas Department of
95. Insurance which make exclusions in title policies
96. regarding mineral rights more conspicuous in order
97. to better inform the land purchaser of this exception
98. to coverage.
99. • legislation allowing title insurance coverage be
100. made available as an option for mineral rights on
101. land title insurance policies.
102. • a requirement that producers with one or more
103. active oil leases have a minimum of \$1,000,000 in
104. liability insurance prior to drilling and maintain
105. coverage until production ceases.
106. • requiring proof of insurance to secure a drilling
107. permit and to sell oil with no grandfathering of leases.
108. • requiring the lessee to obtain a damage release
109. from the surface owner that includes provisions to
110. reimburse the surface owner for:
111. 1. Damage to livestock.

112. 2. Damage to the surface.
113. 3. Damage sustained because of reduced produc-
114. tion of the land.
115. 4. Damage incurred because of devaluation of the
116. property.
117. 5. Damage resulting from the use of any natural
118. resources other than those for which the lease is
119. executed.
120. 6. Damage resulting from the inability of the sur-
121. face owner to carry on farming or ranching operations
122. as previously conducted.
123. • the following restrictions for seismographic
124. operations:
125. 1. No seismographic permits should be granted
126. without consulting all landowners in the survey area.
127. 2. All seismographic holes should be recorded.
128. 3. All seismographic holes should be either ce-
129. mented, filled with mud or gel before surface capping.
130. 4. All exploration work from aircraft should be
131. stopped.
132. 5. The seismographic operations should be as-
133. signed to the jurisdiction of the Texas Commission
134. on Environmental Quality.
135. 6. Seismic companies should be responsible for
136. damages to the land owner and surface tenant by
137. any company with which they subcontract.
138. • legislation protecting royalty owners in the event
139. of the financial failure of the crude oil gathering or
140. purchasing company.
141. • legislation preventing any oil operator or oil
142. company in violation of Railroad Commission regula-
143. tions from securing any drilling permits by changing
144. the name of the company or by other questionable
145. practices.
146. • legislation granting counties the statutory au-
147. thority to execute a valid oil and gas lease on a county
148. road right of way where it owns a fee simple interest
149. including the mineral estate.
150. • enforcement of the strip mining law and regula-
151. tions to provide full protection for surface property
152. rights and to minimize damages resulting from ex-
153. traction of subsurface minerals.
154. • regulations requiring sulfur bearing sand should
155. be placed back in the pit near the depth from which
156. it was extracted and surface damage created by
157. strip mining or other mineral and/or sand extraction
158. practices be repaired to restore the land surface to a
159. condition acceptable to the surface owner.
160. We oppose:
161. • efforts of federal authorities to regulate our
162. state resources.
163. • any compulsory unitization or pooling of gas or
164. oil acreage.
165. • legislation that would change existing agree-
166. ments between the surface owner and the lessee.
167. • oil and gas exploration, surface pipe lines and

168. seismographic testing from county roads and rights-
169. of-way without consent of adjacent property owners.

Groundwater **151**

1. We believe that under common law, landowners
2. own the groundwater in place beneath their land.
3. And, this common law ownership provides the land-
4. owner with a vested property right to a fair chance to
5. capture a fair share of groundwater under their land
6. for beneficial use. But, this common law ownership
7. does not give the landowner the right a to specific
8. quantity of water under their land.
9. We also believe in reasonable regulation of this
10. vested property right in groundwater based on valid
11. scientific information to prevent waste, conserve
12. and preserve groundwater, prevent subsidence, and
13. protect the property rights of all landowners.
14. We support:
15. • landowners having an ownership interest in
16. all groundwater beneath the surface of their land,
17. including brackish groundwater.
18. • this ownership interest giving the landowner a
19. vested or “constitutionally protected” right to drill a
20. well and produce groundwater; however, we do not
21. believe the ownership interest in groundwater gives
22. the landowner a vested right to a specific quantity of
23. groundwater under their land.
24. • the reasonable regulation of the ownership in-
25. terest in groundwater beneath the surface and the
26. vested right to produce groundwater while protecting
27. the groundwater resources of the area.
28. • landowners lawfully owning and controlling the
29. groundwater captured on their land.
30. • the common law doctrine rule of capture in
31. areas of the state without a groundwater conserva-
32. tion district.
33. • the creation of locally controlled groundwater
34. conservation districts to manage groundwater where
35. management is needed to ensure the viability of
36. agriculture and rural communities.
37. • allowing districts to adopt rules to manage an
38. aquifer based on local conditions, to prevent waste,
39. to preserve and protect the aquifer, to preserve exist-
40. ing and historic uses, to prevent subsidence, and to
41. achieve desired future conditions.
42. • districts adopting rules to manage an aquifer
43. under the correlative rights principle where practi-
44. cal and feasible.
45. • groundwater districts being required to follow
46. established procedures when considering rules or
47. permits to provide landowners a fair opportunity to
48. be involved in the process.
49. • groundwater conservation districts rules that:
50. - are based on the best science available,
51. - promote good stewardship of available water
52. supplies.

53. - allow landowners to exercise their constitutionally protected private property right to use or
54. market groundwater and respects a landowner's
55. right to a fair share.
56. - define brackish water.
57. - apply the same rules and procedures to all
58. groundwater, including brackish groundwater,
59. regulated by a groundwater conservation district.
60. • the authority of districts to prohibit the export
61. of groundwater when the amount to be exported ex-
62. ceeds the amount of groundwater needed for future
63. use in the local area.
64. • prohibiting the exportation of groundwater from
65. a local groundwater conservation district until the
66. district has obtained or developed reliable scientific
67. information about the stored supply and recharge
68. characteristics of the district aquifers, and has ad-
69. opted a management plan and rules.
70. • districts being granted specific authority to pro-
71. hibit pumping of groundwater into "vanity ponds" for
72. appearance purposes, and districts being required to
73. prohibit such pumping in a critical groundwater area.
74. • groundwater conservation districts evaluat-
75. ing and considering the impact on the rights of all
76. groundwater users and landowners in a manner
77. consistent with the right to a fair share when adopt-
78. ing rules or issuing permits.
79. • groundwater wells for domestic and livestock
80. purposes with a maximum capacity of 25,000 gallons
81. per day located on real property of ten acres or more
82. being exempt from regulation by a district.
83. • all state lands located within a groundwater
84. conservation district being subject to all rules and
85. regulations of the groundwater district.
86. • any person capturing groundwater from any
87. aquifer against which a tax has been levied, being
88. required to pay taxes on groundwater transported
89. from the district.
90. • the authority of locally controlled groundwater
91. conservation districts to assess a fee on groundwater
92. captured by a governmental entity who owns the
93. property on which the groundwater is captured, but
94. is exempt from being assessed property taxes by the
95. district.
96. • the state assisting districts with the legal and
97. data resources necessary to manage groundwater.
98. • the authority of districts to require a permit to
99. export groundwater outside the boundaries of the
100. district.
101. • the inclusion of a fee under export permits when
102. needed to mitigate harm caused by the export of
103. groundwater or finance the operation of a district.
104. • groundwater conservation districts being al-
105. lowed to set their own fees for water leaving the
106. district.
- 107.

108. • a streamlined petition process for the creation
109. of a district through the TCEQ.
110. • strong agricultural representation on the gov-
111. erning bodies of groundwater conservation districts.
112. • the directors of a groundwater conservation
113. district being elected to office by the residents of that
114. district. Board members of a ground water conserva-
115. tion district should keep residence within the precinct
116. of the district they represent. A vacancy should be
117. declared if he or she moves from that precinct before
118. the term is up. The board should only be appointed
119. when it is clear agricultural interests will not other-
120. wise be represented on the board.
121. • groundwater conservation districts managing
122. a common area of an aquifer meeting annually and
123. having a cooperative management plan where the
124. management practices of the districts can directly
125. impact one another.
126. • allowing groundwater districts the authority to
127. ensure other districts within the same ground- water
128. management area do not deplete the aquifer.
129. • districts considering the following when adopt-
130. ing rules limiting the production of groundwater:
131. - the groundwater available in all aquifers
132. under the district's jurisdiction;
133. - the amount of groundwater available to be
134. produced under the majority of the district; and
135. - the input of the owners or lessees of the
136. groundwater that will be impacted by the rules
137. • a meaningful appeals process that allows a
138. property owner to challenge a rule, permit, or the
139. establishment of a Desired Future Condition of the
140. aquifer that will result in unreasonable restrictions
141. on a property owner's right to produce groundwater
142. or harm investment-backed expectations.
143. • Texas Farm Bureau educating members on
144. the benefits of creating a groundwater conservation
145. district in certain areas of the state as an option to
146. the rule of capture.
147. • the following regarding the Edwards Aquifer
148. Authority Act:
149. - changes to better reflect the needs of agricul-
150. ture and landowners.
151. - protection of the two acre foot minimum for
152. irrigation and the two dollar acre fee cap for agri-
153. culture in the Edwards Aquifer authority.
154. - amending the EAA Act to give irrigation
155. permit holders the right to lease or transfer their
156. full permit to another person for any use.
157. - any feasible methods to aid in the recharging
158. of water aquifers.
159. • State and Federal agencies bearing full financial
160. responsibility to remediate any action(s) that contami-
161. nate groundwater supplies. They offending agency
162. should also bear the cost of providing neutral repre-

163. sentation and technical expertise for affected parties.
164. • exempting hand dug wells less than 50 feet deep
165. from registration.
166. • water districts using observation wells, nozzle
167. packages, hour readings, center pivots, electric and/
168. or gas consumption, or meters to determine historical
169. water usage. All methods should be formulated
170. allowing for an efficiency decline of at least 10%.
171. • all “water users” abiding by the rules of the
172. groundwater conservation district, including state
173. agencies, governmental entities, municipalities, and
174. the oil and gas industry.
175. • all groundwater pumped for use in drilling or
176. hydraulic fracturing of gas or oil wells:
177. - be metered at the pump and reported to the
178. Groundwater Conservation District;
179. - have a working check valve at the well head
180. to prevent any water flowing back into the aquifer;
181. and
182. - be properly contained.
183. • the privacy of all information obtained by water
184. districts on specific individuals or farm entities and
185. support that said information be kept confidential
186. and not available for public information release.
187. • all data information being de-identified and aggregated
188. before release to any entity or State agency.
189. Producer information should remain confidential
190. and exempted from disclosure from the Freedom of
191. Information Act (FOIA).
192. • groundwater conservation districts receiving
193. notice of and having standing to protest injection
194. wells that may have a detrimental impact on the
195. groundwater resources in the district.
196. • Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) projects
197. that will provide needed water supplies, while protecting
198. the property rights of landowners.
199. • TCEQ permitting ASR projects, but groundwater
200. conservation districts having the authority to monitor
201. ASR projects to ensure there are no detrimental
202. impacts to the existing groundwater supplies or
203. private property rights.
204. • all landowners being compensated for drainage
205. of their brackish groundwater in regulated areas.
206. We oppose:
207. • any state or federal control, oversight or management
208. of groundwater including brackish groundwater.
209. • the exportation of groundwater out of an arid
210. region.
211. • mandatory consolidation of groundwater conservation
212. districts.
213. • districts should not be required to issue permits
214. for uses outside the boundaries of a district that are
215. of longer term than are issued for in-district uses.
216. • the statute requiring a separate process for
217. permitting and regulating brackish groundwater.
218.

- 219. • assessing landowners a fee or tax for capturing
- 220. groundwater on their own property, except when nec-
- 221. essary to fund the operations of a locally controlled
- 222. groundwater conservation district or for exporting
- 223. groundwater outside the boundaries of the district.
- 224. • the classification of any aquifer as an un-
- 225. derground river that would be regulated by the
- 226. state.
- 227. • permitting pumping of groundwater into any
- 228. water course for the purposes of transporting ground-
- 229. water downstream.
- 230. • the use of groundwater to maintain a certain
- 231. level for amenity lakes.
- 232. • water meters being required on irrigation equip-
- 233. ment by TCEQ, taxing entities, or other agencies.
- 234. • any entity being granted sovereign immunity
- 235. from the rules and fees of a groundwater conserva-
- 236. tion district.
- 237. • any changes to the Edwards Aquifer Authority
- 238. Act that will harm agriculture or landowners.
- 239. • districts allowing permit holders to retain full
- 240. right to historical use of the water changes to some
- 241. other use.
- 242. • regulations that attempt to prioritize the benefi-
- 243. cial uses of groundwater between groundwater users,
- 244. whether fresh or brackish.

Surface Water

152

1. We support:
2. • diffuse surface water and wetlands being the
3. lawful property of the surface owners of the land.
4. • actions to limit non-essential domestic uses
5. during times of drought.
6. • the right of landowners to utilize the rainfall
7. that occurs or flows on their land for impoundment,
8. irrigation, or other use regardless of prior claims
9. downstream.
10. • agricultural producers and landowners rights to
11. impound a reasonable amount of surface water, up to
12. 200 acre feet, without permit for domestic, livestock
13. and wildlife management use based upon the climate
14. in the geographic location of the impoundment, the
15. degree of intensity of the operation, and the tract size
16. where the impoundment will be located.
17. • the construction of retention ponds to store
18. runoff water to help control flooding and to allow for
19. greater recharge of the underlying aquifers. These
20. facilities should be built through cooperative agree-
21. ments between willing landowners and governmental
22. entities.
23. • a study on the sale of allocated water rights.
24. • state and regional water planning that takes into
25. consideration future needs for water for agricultural
26. uses, and protects established rights of prior benefi-
27. cial users of water as well as the riparian rights of

28. landowners.
29. • water for agricultural purposes should be clas-
30. sified as an essential use of water.
31. • actions that assure agricultural producers that
32. their right to water use is guaranteed and that no in-
33. dustrial user be allowed to infringe upon these rights.
34. • agricultural use being given priority over water
35. for recreation, pleasure, environmental and other
36. less beneficial uses, and having the same priority as
37. industrial use.
38. • regulations requiring river authorities and
39. other publicly owned water management entities
40. to manage water in such a way as to maximize the
41. beneficial use of water.
42. • rules which would require the use and sale of
43. interruptible water by a river authority or public
44. entity be considered an allocation of state water and
45. made in accordance with Texas Water Code section
46. 11.024, referring to preferences of use.
47. • TCEQ having the ability to require municipali-
48. ties and industries to have a conservation plan and
49. implement drought contingency plans when Emer-
50. gency Orders are issued suspending agricultural
51. water rights due to a senior or Priority Call for water.
52. • a water banking system or TCEQ creating an
53. emergency water banking system or fund to ensure
54. that senior water rights are fairly compensated as
55. required by law when the state must temporarily re-
56. allocate senior water rights for emergency purposes.
57. • changing the definition of domestic and mu-
58. nicipal use in the Administrative Code to delete
59. recreational and industrial use since they are already
60. listed in statute.
61. • regulations that would require that when reser-
62. voirs are constructed a predetermined percentage of
63. the impounded water should remain in state control
64. to help maintain natural flow history.
65. • local control of use planning for rivers, streams,
66. and the land bordering them.
67. • a standard for classification of “navigable wa-
68. ters” so that the classification has the least impact
69. on private property rights.
70. • defining navigable waters as continuously mov-
71. ing water with a depth of 24 inches or more.
72. • an administrative process to challenge the desig-
73. nation of a river or stream as “navigable water,” and
74. a process to reevaluate this designation periodically.
75. • small economically efficient dams and reservoirs
76. located closer to the point of utilization or off-channel
77. reservoirs that scalp excess flow during flood events and
78. storing that water either on the surface or in an aquifer.
79. • construction of reservoirs along streams for
80. urban use if the cost of the reservoir is paid for by
81. the users of the water.
82. • more landowner protection when land is con-

83. demned for public reservoirs.

84. • Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

85. and the U.S. Corps of Engineers to consulting with

86. landowners bordering rivers and streams below dams

87. and reservoirs regarding release of water. Water dis-

88. charge should maintain historic normal flow. Excess

89. of flood discharge should be gradual and managed to

90. prevent downstream flooding and erosion.

91. • rules which would require that environmental

92. impact studies on the impact of discharges from

93. dams or reservoirs in excess of 3,000 cubic feet per

94. second on the bed, banks, and streams below the

95. dams or reservoirs. These studies should be done

96. and reported to the riparian stream owners at least

97. every five years.

98. • capturing excess river flow in off-channel reser-

99. voirs to be stored and used provided that:

100. - the off channel reservoirs are filled only

101. when the river basin is deemed by its governing

102. authority to have excess flow,

103. - to the extent possible any land used in con-

104. struction of the off channel reservoirs and other

105. facilities needed be purchased from willing sellers

106. with the seller having the right to request a cash

107. payment or other property in exchange for the

108. land purchased.

109. • voluntary water rights marketing systems that

110. provide maximum protection and compensation to

111. landowners. The Texas Water Bank should remain

112. a voluntary program.

113. • changes to simplify TCEQ's irrigation permit

114. procedures and standardize expiration and renewal

115. dates.

116. • TCEQ initiating the development of a system of

117. irrigation allotment for the middle section of the Rio

118. Grande River which will provide a minimum percent

119. of the yearly amount of water available to irrigate.

120. • legislation which would prohibit water rights

121. that have been canceled or forfeited, from being re-

122. permitted for use outside of the county where the

123. water right was originally appropriated.

124. • compensation or reimbursement for landowners

125. for flood damages caused by an over storage of water

126. in reservoirs controlled by state river authorities, the

127. Corps of Engineers, or others.

128. • the expedited construction of the Allens Creek

129. reservoir project.

130. We oppose:

131. • any legislation or action which would take away

132. the riparian rights of landowners to use water from

133. streams adjacent to or on their property, for essential

134. domestic or livestock uses regardless of the use of

135. such rights in the past.

136. • activities such as irrigation of lawns and water

137. for aesthetics being considered essential domestic

138. uses of water.
139. • modification or canceling of current beneficial
140. users water rights to maintain “instream flow” on
141. segments of Texas rivers and streams.
142. • subjecting current diverters to further test and
143. requirements not currently required by law.
144. • state or federal control of runoff water into non-
145. navigable streams, roadside ditches, or depressions
146. that temporarily hold water.
147. • any legislation that would hinder agricultural
148. producers in obtaining water for their crops and live-
149. stock or that would make the water more expensive.
150. • condemnation of surface water rights, except
151. for domestic, essential municipal, or livestock use
152. necessary to sustain life.
153. • reclassification of state water from recreational
154. or instream use to industrial use.
155. • instream flows being served strictly for bays and
156. estuaries, recreation, pleasure or other uses, other
157. than water for livestock, not presently designated as
158. beneficial uses under current water law.
159. • any effort by the state to expand the interpreted
160. definition of the term “navigable water.”
161. • TCEQ assessing individuals an administrative
162. penalty, without due process, for dams constructed on
163. rivers, creeks, or streams the agency later determines
164. to be navigable.
165. • the construction and funding of large reservoirs,
166. dams, channelization and channel realignment
167. projects that create a large loss of tax base, destroy
168. enormous agricultural acreage for the advantage of
169. cities, recreation, or other uses of state water detri-
170. mental to agriculture, unless the water project would
171. have less of an impact on agriculture and rural Texas
172. than other potential water projects in addressing
173. those water needs.
174. • the forced release of any water from river au-
175. thorities or reservoirs without remuneration.
176. • the planning and further consideration of the
177. CUERO I and SANDIES reservoirs in DeWitt and
178. Gonzales counties and the Goliad Dam on the San
179. Antonio River in Goliad County and the Marvin
180. Nichols Reservoir in Northeast Texas due to the loss
181. of tax base for the taxing entities in each county and
182. because the intended end-users have not considered
183. all alternative means of additional water sources.
184. • river authorities or other publicly owned water
185. management entities intentionally or unintentionally
186. changing historic water use to solely benefit recre-
187. ational users at the expense of other higher priority
188. water users; however, in the event this happens the
189. recreational users should be required to compensate
190. the water management entity so other alternative
191. water supplies can be developed or conservation
192. measures can be implemented to satisfy the unmet

193. demands of the higher priority water users that have
194. been impacted.

- 195. • maintaining reservoir levels for recreational
- 196. purposes instead of flood control or consumptive use.
- 197. • any inter-basin transfer that would leave the
- 198. basin of origin with unmet future water needs.
- 199. • inter-basin transfers unless:
- 200. - a surcharge is required on the transfer to
- 201. provide monies to assist agricultural producers
- 202. with satisfying their demand for water;
- 203. - the receiving basin has implemented a water
- 204. conservation plan;
- 205. - the receiving basin has exhausted all other
- 206. reasonable means of providing their water needs;
- 207. - the receiving basin agree to assist with con-
- 208. servation efforts in the basin of origin;
- 209. - an impact study is conducted and shows that
- 210. the transfer will benefit both the receiving basin
- 211. and the basin of origin and will not negatively
- 212. impact agricultural production, local or regional
- 213. economies or the environment of the basin of origin;
- 214. - the water being transferred is given a junior
- 215. priority date for any inter-basin transfer that
- 216. would harm existing water right holders or third
- 217. party surface water users in the basin of origin.
- 218. • the Rio Grande Water Master failing to des-
- 219. ignate flood flows in the Rio Grande below Falcon
- 220. Reservoir as “No Charge” water when no stored water
- 221. is being released from Falcon Reservoir.

222. **Water Masters:**

223. We support:

- 224. • Water Master programs that:
- 225. - are initiated by water right holders to ad-
- 226. dress specific water availability concerns, such
- 227. as shortages or drought.
- 228. - are limited in scope to encompass the small-
- 229. est geographical area practicable to ensure effec-
- 230. tive management in accordance with the Texas
- 231. Water Code.
- 232. - establishes an oversight body that is represen-
- 233. tative of the water rights held in the program area.
- 234. • the appointment of temporary water masters
- 235. in areas of the state where normal conditions and
- 236. water use do not merit the need for a water master.
- 237. • the termination of a water master program upon
- 238. submittal of a petition signed by a majority of the
- 239. water permit holders in the program area.

240. We oppose:

- 241. • permanent, basin-wide water master programs
- 242. without the explicit consent of a majority of water
- 243. right holders in a given river basin.
- 244. • any added, basin-wide fees on water right per-
- 245. mits to support a water master program that only
- 246. benefits a small portion of a given river basin.
- 247. • any action(s) by a water master that would ef-
- 248. fectively exempt junior water rights from the doctrine

Water Management

153

1. We support:
2. • regional water planning that is balanced between surface water and groundwater and provide
3. the greatest benefit to all the citizens of the State of
4. Texas. Prohibiting inter-basin transfers while allowing
5. the exporting of groundwater will not provide that
6. balance, and will harm those dependent on groundwater while benefiting those who use surface water.
- 7.
8. • the appointment of at least one owner of an agricultural production enterprise as a commissioner
9. to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).
- 10.
11. • the Texas Legislature specifying the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality as the lead agency
12. for water, water quality and wetlands; however, the TCEQ should recommend rather than formulate
13. policy.
14. • the establishment of an agricultural division within the TCEQ.
- 15.
16. • state fundings for a “state of the art” water laboratory, available to run water samples for individuals
17. on a cost basis.
18. • a dedicated source of revenue to fund the state’s share of projects in the state water plan, including
19. an appropriation of general revenue or Rainy Day Funds into a dedicated revolving fund for water
20. infrastructure. This source of revenue should be broad-based and low-cost with minimal effect on
21. agricultural producers.
- 22.
23. • the election of all directors of river authorities.
24. • legislation to divide river basins into geographical voting districts, with the directors being elected
25. by the people they serve.
26. • all state river authorities being placed under the state’s Sunset Review process for accountability
27. and oversight.
28. • all municipalities and water supply districts, in need of water, look into the feasibility of desalination.
29. • state and federal assistance for the development of desalination projects.
30. • water for agricultural purposes being classified as an essential use of water.
31. • expeditious development of brackish and sea water desalination projects to meet the growing
32. demands of municipalities.
33. • state and federal resources being allocated with a high priority to assure a timely availability of this
34. new water supply.
35. • state funding of mandatory water programs since regulation and enforcement of state water law
36. accomplishes a public purpose and is in the public
37. interest.
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53. • rainwater collection for domestic use and to
54. encourage state and county governments to promote
55. incentives for the use of rainwater.

56. • legislative funding of low interest loans and
57. tax incentives to promote water conservation and
58. efficiency in both urban and rural environments,
59. thus preventing waste.

60. • reinstating the provisions in the U.S. Tax Code
61. that would allow the Agricultural Water Conserva-
62. tion Equipment Loan Program administered through
63. the Texas Water Development Board to be utilized.

64. • legislation that encourages and supports vol-
65. untary water and land stewardship by providing
66. assistance and incentives to landowners for activities
67. which benefit both urban and rural Texas.

68. • using the most practical water conservation
69. measures available for all above ground sprinkler
70. systems that utilize groundwater as their source.

71. • the concept of importing water into Texas for
72. domestic, municipal, agricultural, commercial and
73. industrial purposes. Imported water should be paid
74. for by the users.

75. • the construction of pipelines or reservoirs being
76. financed by the beneficiaries of the project.

77. • more aggressive programs to improve water
78. conservation and water quality, by increasing both
79. research and investment in removal and control of
80. non-beneficial/non-productive, invasive plant and
81. animal species that consume or impede water flow
82. in our streams, ponds, lakes and estuaries.

83. • the continued programs of brush removal and
84. riparian management that aids in flood control.

85. • intense research on beneficial plant species,
86. animal species and agricultural practices that will
87. conserve water and more efficient methods of apply-
88. ing water, as well as developing crops with low water
89. requirements and creating more efficient methods of
90. dry land farming.

91. • brush control programs that are positive for
92. range, wildlife and livestock management and ben-
93. efits endangered species and water conservation.

94. • Texas and United States government efforts to
95. solve the problem of Mexico not delivering water to
96. Rio Grande reservoirs as specified in the 1944 water
97. treaty between the U.S. and Mexico.

98. • efforts to ensure that water deliveries to the Rio
99. Grande River and allocations are strictly honored
100. by U.S. and Mexico as stipulated by the 1944 treaty.

101. • federal and state programs designed to allevi-
102. ate hardships to Texas agribusinesses as a result of
103. Mexico's treaty non-compliance, including crop insur-
104. ance APHs (Actual Production History).

105. • financing of improvements to water delivery
106. systems along the Rio Grande River.

107. • the construction of channel dams to prevent loss

108. of water into the Gulf of Mexico.
109. • changes to the Texas Department of Licensing
110. and Regulations rule to enable persons who work
111. on submersible pumps, pump jacks and windmills
112. to operate under a single license instead of three
113. separate licenses.
114. • TCEQ providing statistical information about
115. water rates to the water utilities that they regulate
116. and assist in establishing and defending water tariffs.
117. • requiring that all new or amended water right
118. permits, reuse authorizations, or certificates of ad-
119. judication be subject to conservation requirements.
120. • requiring municipalities and water utilities that
121. have taxing authority or collect fees for water impos-
122. ing water conservation measures.
123. • legislation which would require restriction for
124. environmental flows to be considered in re-permitting
125. an existing water right for a new use.
126. • public water utilities restructuring their water
127. rates to promote water conservation.
128. • voluntary soil and water conservation programs.
129. • the use of best management landscape principles
130. to promote water conservation.
131. • legislation requiring “smart controllers” with
132. rain sensors or moisture sensors on all landscape
133. irrigation systems.
134. • Texas Water Development Board in its respon-
135. sibility to develop and implement a process for state
136. and regional water planning.
137. • a requirement that all developers assure an
138. adequate water supply for all properties to be sold
139. within their development.
140. • the Board of Directors of local conservation,
141. water, and water control and improvement districts
142. having a voice in retaining qualified personnel at
143. the local level.
144. • reclamation and reuse of water used in hydraulic
145. fracturing in gas and oil drilling and completions.
146. • regulations of water restrictions implemented by
147. municipalities being regulated and enforced to assure
148. the economic stability of production agriculture and
149. agribusinesses.
150. • agriculture having priority over businesses that
151. can sustain mechanical production under water use
152. restrictions.
153. • enabling the Texas Railroad Commission to regu-
154. late the amount of fresh water from aquifers utilized
155. in oil and gas well drilling and hydraulic fracturing.
156. • the Railroad Commission suspending the use of
157. aquifer water, if aquifer levels show critical decline,
158. until normal levels return.
159. • conjunctive use of surface water reservoirs and
160. groundwater resources if a utilization plan is estab-
161. lished that:
162. - demonstrates that the aquifers can sustain

163. pumping to meet local needs as well as additional
164. needs of the project;
- 165. - prohibits ground water from being used to
 - 166. fill a reservoir.
 - 167. - compiles with the rules and regulations of
 - 168. any local groundwater conservation district(s).
 - 169. - contains provisions to terminate or temporar-
 - 170. ily suspend operations if during the term of the
 - 171. project significant drawdown of the aquifers occurs.
 - 172. • irrigation districts improving their system to be
 - 173. efficient and prevent waste of water.
 - 174. • municipal re-use and water recycling technolo-
 - 175. gies that do not negatively impact downstream water
 - 176. right holders or the environment.
177. We oppose:
- 178. • municipalities taking over an operating irriga-
 - 179. tion.
 - 180. • legislation that would give municipalities water
 - 181. that is required to sustain agriculture.
 - 182. • any efforts to amend reclamation laws that
 - 183. would negatively affect the priority of water alloca-
 - 184. tion for agricultural use and would reduce the Sec-
 - 185. retary of Interiors authority to direct water usage.
 - 186. • unfunded mandates for conservation measures
 - 187. for existing (historic) water use.
 - 188. • restrictions on any existing water right holders
 - 189. (historic use) to ensure instream flows.
 - 190. • the release of raw municipal water into bays
 - 191. and estuaries during critical drought periods for any
 - 192. environmental or industrial reason.
 - 193. • compulsory soil and water conservation pro-
 - 194. grams and practices.
 - 195. • any impact fees on lands that drain into a wa-
 - 196. tershed.
 - 197. • the use of fresh water to flood or frac oil-bearing
 - 198. formations if other options are available.
 - 199. • efforts to tax agriculture interests and rural
 - 200. communities not directly benefiting from the devel-
 - 201. opment of municipal water resources.

Water Quality

154

1. We support:
2. • stricter enforcement of laws that will protect
3. surface, underground irrigation and domestic water
4. supplies from pollution, contamination, and deple-
5. tion by nuclear waste dumps, solid waste dumps,
6. toxic waste, wastewater sources, strip mining and
7. other mining operations and oil field production and
8. exploration.
9. • reasonable legislation and regulations designed
10. to clean up existing polluted surface water.
11. • a “use attainability analysis” process on all
12. water bodies to determine the appropriate use clas-
13. sification.
14. • legislation which would require state and munic-

15. ipal government entities to abide by the same water
16. quality standards required of the general public in
17. regard to pollution of surface and underground water.
18. • rules which would require municipalities to
19. draw their water for domestic use no more than five
20. miles downstream from their waste disposal outlet.
21. • well-head protection of all wells to prevent
22. groundwater contamination.
23. • plugging of all abandoned non-producing water
24. wells and capping of all abandoned producing water
25. wells.
26. • plugging temporarily abandoned wells if they are
27. not returned to production within a five-year period.
28. • the Texas Railroad Commission strengthening
29. regulations that provide for proper plugging of aban-
30. doned oil and gas wells.
31. • maintaining the Texas Railroad Commission's
32. well plugging fund solely for the purpose of plugging
33. abandoned oil and gas wells.
34. • efforts to protect and detect chemical and bacte-
35. rial contamination of all water aquifers.
36. • the Texas Commission on Environmental Qual-
37. ity should prove that contamination is harmful
38. through proven tolerance levels.
39. • the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation
40. Board administering the state's agricultural non-
41. point source pollution programs.
42. • the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation
43. Board being the permitting agency for non-contested
44. agricultural air and water permits.
45. • the evaluation and use of constructed wetlands
46. as a water purification method and TCEQ to consider
47. these systems as an alternative to "no discharge"
48. permits.
49. • the collection of water quality drainage fees by
50. municipalities to retrofitting existing developments
51. with water quality control structures that meet the
52. standards required in new developments. In areas
53. being retrofitted, no listing of any aquatic species
54. should be listed for protected status for a minimum of
55. three (3) years following the completion of the project.
56. • property owners not being liable for the content,
57. quality, and quantity of water injected or stored un-
58. derground by a third party when it is injected below
59. or adjacent to the owner's property.
60. • adopting water well drilling, regulations pro-
61. hibiting commingling of water in the same well bore,
62. unless allowed by the local groundwater district.
63. We oppose:
64. • chemical or nuclear waste injection wells in the
65. State of Texas.
66. • regulations that unfairly target nutrient runoff
67. from agricultural operations but ignore non-agricul-
68. tural contributors.
69. • the use of fresh water for water flood aspects of
70. oil production.

71. • designation of any body of water as Outstanding
72. National Resource Water (ONRW).
73. • the Coastal Coordination Council usurping local
74. and state agency rule-making authority or directly
75. or indirectly infringe on personal property rights.

Waste Disposal

155

1. We support:
2. • state research to develop safe methods of disposing
3. of any hazardous materials.
4. • a comprehensive revision of legislation dealing
5. with radioactive wastes and toxic chemical wastes
6. subject to state control. The legislation should include
7. understandable language and definitions of chemical/
8. toxic wastes, with comparisons of exposure to market
9. available products. Such revision should include:
10. - Provisions for permanent disposal of low level
11. radioactive and toxic chemical wastes.
12. - Strict regulation of transportation of hazard-
13. ous waste by truck on Texas highways.
14. - Strict regulation of transportation of hazard-
15. ous wastes by train on Texas railways.
16. - Specific parameters of acceptable sites for
17. facilities based on geology, climate and population.
18. - Provisions for maximum local control in the
19. establishment of sites for such facilities.
20. • each state assuming complete responsibility for
21. its own radioactive waste disposal.
22. • requiring a public hearing prior to the estab-
23. lishment of a hazardous material disposal site in
24. the county of the proposed site. All property owners
25. within 10 miles of the site should be notified of the
26. hearing.
27. • public hearings being advertised in all county
28. or city publications, radio and electronic media in
29. the county for a minimum of 3 consecutive weeks
30. immediately prior to the hearing.
31. • legislation to limit the amount of radioactive
32. waste that could be stored on the generating plant
33. site. No additional sites should be approved by the
34. state until legislation is revised.
35. • legislation that would prevent radioactive and
36. toxic waste dumps from being placed on or beneath
37. productive agricultural land and in areas with large
38. underground water reservoirs.
39. • financial compensation being paid when a farm-
40. er or ranch is adversely impacted by an entity operat-
41. ing a facility that processes, manufactures, stores or
42. disposes of hazardous, toxic, or radioactive waste, or
43. any other material that may pose an adverse impact
44. on the economic well-being of agriculture.
45. • county governments having the authority to
46. limit the disposal of toxic and industrial wastes
47. within the geographical boundaries of the county.
48. The citizens of the county should decide the limit of

49. such disposal.
50. • making the generators of waste responsible for
51. its proper disposition.
52. • a method for solid waste management services
53. that would benefit all persons in the state. These
54. services should be cost effective, environmentally
55. sound and locally accessible.
56. • coordination between local governmental sub-
57. divisions to develop plans to minimize the amount
58. of solid waste to be disposed.
59. • regional solid waste management facilities when
60. the operation of a local waste management facility is
61. not economically feasible.
62. • recycling of waste products over other means of
63. solid waste management.
64. • phasing out the landfill disposal of toxic chemi-
65. cal wastes and providing incentives for industries to
66. implement resource recovery projects.
67. • regulations requiring substantial bonding for
68. toxic disposal sites.
69. • the Texas Commission on Environmental Qual-
70. ity moving expeditiously to hold hearings for "Part
71. B" operating permits.
72. • required monitoring for any hazardous waste
73. facility that handles material proven to be harmful
74. to human health, air, water, or agricultural land.
75. • incentives for industry to reduce the disposal
76. of toxic or hazardous wastes, including recycling,
77. biological, chemical, or physical treatment, or force
78. decomposition, so as to immobilize, detoxify, or de-
79. stroy a material's hazardous state.
80. • manufacturing processes and rewarding alter-
81. native technologies that reduce hazardous waste
82. production at their source.
83. • an annual per ton fee on the incineration, injec-
84. tion, and landfill disposal of hazardous waste that
85. is no lower than similar fees charged by contiguous
86. states. These fees should be placed in an interest
87. bearing "superfund" for the sole use of monitoring
88. and cleanup of abandoned or disposal sites.
89. • legislation that exempts from liability indi-
90. viduals or farm and ranch corporations who become
91. owners of real estate found to be contaminated with
92. toxic substances if pollution took place prior to their
93. ownership.
94. • research and promotion by Texas A&M AgriLife
95. into the use of constructed wetlands in place of drain
96. fields for septic tanks and facultative lagoons for
97. disposal of wastewater.
98. • cooperation and compliance with the state law
99. on sewage disposal; however, we favor repeal of that
100. portion of the law requiring the licensing and taxing
101. of homeowners for septic tanks.
102. • legislation or regulations that allow property
103. owners with more than 25 acres to dispose of site

104. generated non-hazardous household waste on site
105. and be exempted from Type III municipal waste
106. disposal permit requirements.

107. • the use of biodegradable disposable diapers
108. instead of non-biodegradable diapers.

109. • the “Don’t Bag It” lawn maintenance program
110. of the Texas A&M Extension.

111. • rules and regulations concerning the applica-
112. tion of municipal sludge on agricultural land that
113. are based on sound science and environmental
114. testing. Agricultural land values and surface or
115. underground water must not be adversely impacted
116. by these practices.

117. • establishing an on-going research program to
118. evaluate and verify the relative safety of applying
119. municipal sludge to agricultural lands for beneficial
120. use, and to include agronomic value in the beneficial
121. use determination.

122. • site-specific buffer zone requirements for lands
123. receiving municipal sludge that take into account
124. rainfall potential, topography, hydrology, leaching
125. potential and other factors such as proximity to
126. residences or public areas. The TCEQ should ensure
127. that Land Application Sites do not have abandoned
128. or uncapped water wells on application sites.

129. • the development of a more efficient method of
130. supervising water flood, injection and salt water sites
131. by the Texas Railroad Commission.

132. • the Oil and Gas division of the Texas Railroad
133. Commission giving equal consideration to landown-
134. ers and oil companies in carrying out the laws and
135. regulations of Texas.

136. • vigorous prosecution of all firms, especially
137. vacuum truck service companies, which dispose of
138. salt water on land, in public road ditches, or in any
139. manner other than that prescribed by law. All fluid
140. wastes derived from oil and gas production, including
141. salt water, brine, and other injectable wastes, should
142. be disposed of in a disposal well.

143. • the Texas Railroad Commission increasing the
144. fees on salt water disposal wells in order to more
145. closely inspect and police these wells.

146. • Texas Railroad Commission increasing the one-
147. fourth mile radius check for domestic water wells or
148. oil and gas wells at proposed locations of injection
149. and disposal wells.

150. • the following regarding oil and gas waste dis-
151. posal wells:

152. - appropriate limitations on the injection
153. pressure;

154. - dams constructed around salt water storage
155. tanks;

156. - watchmen 24 hours a day;

157. - limitation on injection to depths below any water
158. formation which will artesian to the surface;

159. - gauges in well to detect drops in pressure, warn-

160. ing of possible seepage; and,
161. - casing placed and cemented to the depth
162. of disposal (for greater protection, the injection
163. pipe should be cemented within the casing and
164. cemented entirely when abandoned).
165. - casing of temporarily abandoned wells and
166. plugged wells that will be used as water injection
167. wells or disposal wells, should have mandatory
168. mechanical integrity tests performed and wit-
169. nessed by the Railroad Commission before the
170. well is put into production, and tested annually
171. thereafter on active wells.
172. - regardless of the regulatory hydrologic sepa-
173. ration requirements, disposal wells should not be
174. placed within five miles of a city limit.
175. - water disposal wells, commercial disposal
176. wells be tested at least twice a year and make it
177. mandatory for the proper representative from the
178. Railroad Commission to be present.
179. • notification of property owners within 5 miles
180. of a proposed disposal well (fluid wastes from oil
181. and gas drilling and production) by certified mail
182. of permit hearings. Notice of hearings should also
183. be published in the appropriate newspapers in the
184. area of the county of the proposed well sites, and the
185. permit hearings should be located in the county of
186. the proposed disposal well location.
187. • “disposal units” being established for disposal
188. wells.
189. • property owners with acreage in an oil and gas
190. production unit being compensated when depleted
191. strata are utilized as disposal wells. Compensation
192. should be based on unit disposal and the units should
193. be comparable to those established for production.
194. • reinstating the used tire disposal program in
195. Texas.
196. • the “Ag Chemical Waste Collection and Recycling
197. Days” and the inclusion of spent tractor tires, tracks,
198. and irrigation polypipe.
199. • an affordable disposal fee for used tractor tires
200. and tracks.
201. • a refundable deposit on 30 gallon chemical
202. drums and 5 gallon oil buckets to encourage recy-
203. cling by consumers and reuse by chemical and oil
204. companies.
205. We oppose:
206. • the storing of out-of-state radioactive waste or
207. other out-of-state radioactive by-products in Texas.
208. • electric utility dump sites being financed with
209. public funds.
210. • condemnation of private lands for the disposal
211. of radioactive wastes.
212. • issuing permits to chemical waste companies in
213. flood plain areas.
214. • the location of commercial hazardous and toxic

215. waste disposal sites in areas where a threat exists
 216. to the quality of nearby surface waters.
- 217. • the landowners being held responsible for the
 218. cleanup expense or fines levied on trash that was not
 219. generated by the landowner.
 - 220. • the Texas Commission on Environmental Qual-
 221. ity being the benefactor of proceeds from sanitary
 222. landfills while at the same time approving applica-
 223. tions. This is a conflict of interest.
 - 224. • out-of-state waste materials coming into the
 225. state.
 - 226. • property owners being held accountable for
 227. contamination of disposal pits where a hazardous
 228. waste was deposited prior to a chemical being clas-
 229. sified a hazardous waste. No fines should be levied
 230. against property owners and the state should pay
 231. all cleanup costs.
 - 232. • grease and grit trap waste being land applied
 233. under a “beneficial use determination,” or being
 234. mixed or blended with other sludge unless it is ca-
 235. pable of meeting Class A or Class AB requirements
 236. for beneficial use as per TAC 312.
 - 237. • being charged a disposal fee for tires or batteries
 238. if a dealer is not in possession of tires and batteries
 239. that are in need of disposal.

Agricultural By-Products 156

1. We support:
2. • the use of sound science by state agencies in
 3. evaluating methods to best manage agricultural by-
 4. products. Solutions must be workable and practical.
5. • allowing private landowners to utilize sludge
 6. and animal waste as fertilizer.
7. • requiring all livestock and poultry operations
 8. permitted by the Texas Commission on Environmental
 9. Quality, be inspected periodically to assure compliance
 10. with, and understanding of, laws and regulations.
11. • any newly planned facilities requiring such
 12. permits should have site selections and engineer-
 13. ing plans drawn and approved before construction
 14. begins, and all work completed and approved before
 15. the facilities are placed into use.
16. • packing plants being required to dispose of ani-
 17. mal wastes and by-products in a manner that is not
 18. offensive in the neighboring area.
19. • the reasonable and consistent regulation of
 20. animal feeding operations and the wastes generated
 21. on those facilities in a manner that is protective of
 22. the state’s water resources and economically feasible
 23. for operators.
24. • new regulations for animal feeding operations
 25. being phased-in to allow livestock and poultry opera-
 26. tions to address their individual situations over time.
27. • state/federal cost-sharing, low interest loans,
 28. grants, and tax incentives to help animal feeding

29. operations comply with new or changing regulations.
30. • local innovation and ideas to meet or exceed
31. published guidelines for animal waste management.
32. • the TCEQ setting reasonable standards for the
33. land application of livestock and poultry manure on
34. permitted facilities that are regulated by the agency.
35. We oppose:
36. • arbitrarily defining agricultural wastes and by-
37. products as hazardous waste.
38. • national standards for pollution control. Pol-
39. lution control standards should be developed at the
40. state and local level.

TRANSPORTATION

Farm-to-Market Roads 157

1. We support a significant increase in the state road
2. building and maintenance program of farm-to-market
3. roads, rights-of-way, and rural highways. Any in-
4. crease in gasoline tax should result in a proportional
5. increase in farm-to-market system allocation. We
6. oppose depleting FM road funds by matching federal
7. funds to be used only on U. S. highways.
8. All signs, safety rails and mail boxes placed in the
9. rights-of-way should allow room for passage of farm
10. machinery without creating hazardous conditions.
11. Farm-to-market roads in urban areas should be re-
12. designated as state highways and not receive money
13. allocated for farm-to-market roads. TxDOT should
14. repair bridges and road shoulders in a more timely
15. manner. Farm to market roads converted to state
16. highway status should retain their intended purpose,
17. the movement of farm products and equipment. We
18. oppose shifting maintenance of farm to market roads
19. from the state to counties.
20. We oppose Texas Department of Transportation
21. converting roads from asphalt pavement to gravel
22. or emulsified (high-end gravel mixture, oil and rock
23. combination or caliche) surface.
24. Roads listed on the state transportation infra-
25. structure system should be maintained by Texas
26. Department of Transportation.
27. A decision by Texas Department of Transporta-
28. tion to downgrade any paved roads should not be
29. made prior to a public hearing and involving local
30. community officials and weekly local public notices
31. at least three weeks prior to the hearing.
32. We urge the Texas Legislature to adopt laws that
33. allow all farm to market and ranch roads to have free
34. crossovers on concepts like the Trans Texas Corridor.
35. We support using available funds from the Eco-
36. nomic Stabilization Fund (Rainy Day Fund), com-
37. posed of oil and gas severance taxes, to be added to
38. the highway fund for maintenance of roads affected
39. by energy production activities.

1. We believe that the primary responsibilities for
2. the construction, maintenance, locating and polic-
3. ing of highways should remain with the state and
4. the following steps should be taken to improve the
5. states travel system:
6. 1. A blank space for blood type information should
7. be provided on drivers licenses.
8. 2. Fire guards should be maintained where needed
9. on highway rights-of-way.
10. 3. We support adequate mowing to ensure the
11. safety of drivers and minimize fire hazards by ad-
12. equate control of vegetation.
13. 4. Local governments should be able to voluntarily
14. partner with the state in the purchase of rights-of-
15. way. Seismograph of state and county owned rights-
16. of-way should not be permitted.
17. 5. The Texas Department of Transportation should
18. be required to notify all abutting landowners by reg-
19. istered mail of a hearing for acquiring more rights-
20. of-way for existing highway or for the construction
21. of new roads.
22. 6. For new highway construction, any property
23. designated as a Heritage Farm or Ranch by Texas
24. Department of Agriculture should be treated in the
25. same manner as other protected historical, archeo-
26. logical or cemetery sites.
27. 7. When federal, state, or county highways, with
28. restricted or controlled access are constructed, we
29. support legislation requiring underpasses sufficient
30. for moving livestock between the divided property.
31. If this is not economically feasible, the landowner
32. shall be fairly compensated for damages. We also
33. urge the legislature to require Texas Department
34. of Transportation to plan adequate turn-a-rounds
35. for agricultural producers to cross these restricted
36. highways.
37. 8. New highway construction should protect
38. landowners from drainage problems created by
39. construction.
40. 9. Off-road agricultural equipment should not be
41. licensed.
42. Texas Department of Transportation should ade-
43. quately maintain rights-of-way. We favor mowing the
44. full width of rights-of-way alongside all highways and
45. the appropriate use of herbicides where necessary to
46. adequately control undesirable vegetation, providing
47. there are no herbicide sensitive crops growing in the
48. adjacent fields. We support repealing or amending
49. the TxDOT rule punishing landowners for controlling
50. vegetation on adjacent state rights-of-way.
51. We support legislation that will require the design
52. of bypasses to include easy access of motorists to the
53. communities being bypassed. We support the Texas
54. Department of Transportation maintaining the right

55. to set interstate highway speed limits.

56. We support the Texas Department of Transportation's efforts to redesignate and transfer maintenance
57. of city streets which were once a part of the Texas
58. transportation system but have been bypassed to
59. the point that they are primarily or exclusively used
60. for city traffic and are no longer a reasonable part
61. of our cross country highway system or our Farm to
62. Market Road system.

63. We oppose Texas Department of Transportation
64. having the authority to close county roads.

65. We urge that all navigable streams and county
66. or state roads which pass through any national
67. preserve, wilderness, or other federal public lands
68. remain open and under the jurisdiction of the county
69. or state respectively.

70. We oppose concepts like the Trans Texas Corridor.
71. We oppose the acquiring of additional farm and ranch
72. lands through the state powers of eminent domain for
73. the construction of such concepts. Additional division
74. of Texas farms, ranches, and rural communities by
75. such projects would put undue burdens on the rural
76. economies, such as: additional cost and time related
77. to moving equipment and animals from one side of
78. a farm or ranch to another because of a division in
79. farm or ranch by the corridor; the lack of adequate
80. exits to small Texas towns and their economies; and
81. the additional tax burden passed on to the local tax-
82. payers for property removed from the tax base. The
83. addition of new rights-of-way will negatively affect
84. wildlife and hunting in many areas of the state in
85. which hunting has become a major part of farm and
86. ranch income.

87. Any county containing a toll way project should
88. have representation on the governing body of the toll
89. way authority.

90. We oppose the Texas Department of Transportation
91. using taxpayer dollars to advertise in favor of
92. such concepts.

93. We favor our state legislature passing a resolution
94. calling upon the U.S. Congress and the President
95. to stop all efforts toward a North American Union
96. (NAU) or North American Community by way of the
97. Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), to stop
98. the Construction of a North American Super Corridor
99. (also referred to as the NAFTA Super Highway).

100. If tolls are planned for any part of the corridor, a
101. referendum should be held before this tax could be
102. implemented. All efforts should be made to award
103. contracts to Texas and U.S. companies. Security for
104. all parts of the corridor should be planned and hired
105. before construction starts. We oppose non-compete
106. clauses in contracts authorizing construction of tolled
107. highways in the State of Texas.

108. We support authorization of the Attorney General
109. as the ombudsman to oversee all Texas toll road con-
110.

111. tracts to protect the public interest.
112. We oppose the state or TxDOT imposing minimum
113. traffic requirements before a company can build and/
114. or operate a toll road in the State of Texas.
115. We feel it would be appropriate to improve existing
116. state and federal transportation rights-of-way to help
117. move the Texas transportation system forward. We
118. prefer no new rights-of-way for transportation cor-
119. ridors; however, if new rights-of-way are absolutely
120. necessary, we would prefer additional space for cor-
121. ridors be located adjacent to existing rights-of-way.
122. Highways that are toll free should remain toll free.
123. We support legislation that would provide for some
124. conformity in toll road contracts to protect the public.
125. All interstate highways should provide frontage
126. roads on both sides of the highway for farm machinery.
127. We oppose TxDOT spending enormous amounts of
128. funds on overpass and highway beautification proj-
129. ects involving landscaping (planting of trees, shrubs,
130. and flower beds with the installation of irrigation
131. systems which require ongoing landscape mainte-
132. nance) when funds are tight for road construction
133. and maintenance, and water resources are in limited
134. supply for production agriculture and municipalities.
135. The Texas Department of Transportation's first prior-
136. ity should be maintenance of existing roads and not
137. on new projects such as new rest stops, the median
138. cable system, the security lighting at FM and inter-
139. state intersections, and/or the grant funding or new
140. funding for municipal and regional airports.
141. We urge the Texas Legislature to adopt laws that
142. require private companies to reimburse Texas tax-
143. payers for all costs associated with existing roadways
144. (land acquisition, construction and maintenance). We
145. oppose vehicular mileage fees as a means of raising
146. funds for road improvement.
147. We support directional signage on public roadways
148. and new directional signs for "AGRI-TOURS."
149. We support the Freight Shuttle (a private com-
150. pany) using existing TxDOT rights-of-way without
151. the power of eminent domain.

Highway Safety 159

1. All stop signs should indicate whether it is a two,
2. three or four way stop at an intersection. We sup-
3. port the prohibiting of cell phone use by bus drivers
4. when transporting children or customers while the
5. bus is in motion.
6. The use of signs or other objects that obstruct the
7. view for motorists of roadways should be prohibited.
8. We support continued funding for advanced road
9. signs on state roadways including highways, Farm-
10. to-Market, and Ranch Roads.
11. We support current law that requires luminous
12. signs or reflective tape on certain trailers.

13. Rumble-bumps should be cut into shoulders of all
14. new highway construction, or if prohibited, buttons
15. should be installed. We support better lighting and
16. more visible reflectors to mark the entrance and exit
17. ramps to freeways.

18. We support removing the liability of landowners
19. (or their agents) for accidents occurring in “open
20. range” rights-of-way.

21. The tying, penning, or otherwise restraining live-
22. stock on any public road right-of-way, park or rest
23. area, should be prohibited, except for the purpose of
24. loading or unloading.

25. To discourage littering of roadways and parks, we
26. favor enforcing fines for violators, and restricting
27. the use of beverage containers to aluminum cans,
28. returnable glass bottles, or biodegradable products.
29. We support strict enforcement of all roadway litter-
30. ing laws.

31. All drainage facilities should be constructed in
32. such a manner that they will not create a hazard.
33. The permit approval process for the installation of
34. culverts along state highways should be amended to
35. require TxDOT to provide specifications and eleva-
36. tions for proper installation.

37. We urge enforcement of bicycle and jogger safety
38. on highways. We support reasonable bicycle safety
39. laws for the use of state highways and farm-to-
40. market roads.

41. The Texas Aggregate Quarry and Pit Safety Act
42. of 1991 should be amended to exempt agricultural
43. property landowners.

44. We support legislation that would prohibit the sale
45. of goods or services on public rights-of-way without
46. a permit from the governmental entity responsible
47. for the public right-of-way.

48. We support a state law allowing the use of clear
49. strobe lights for the protection of rural letter carriers.

50. We support improving safety for United States
51. Postal Service rural mail carriers by requiring traf-
52. fic on state maintained highways to reduce their
53. speed, as now required for stopped emergency and
54. maintenance vehicles.

55. We urge TxDOT to consider public safety and
56. welfare before closing a roadside park.

57. We support a state wide agriculture awareness
58. safety campaign through multimedia to include
59. billboards, television, radio, etc.

Rail Transportation

160

1. Railroads should provide adequate funding for
2. maintenance and construction of rural railroads in
3. Texas.

4. Railroad service should not be discontinued in a
5. given area without giving 180-day notice to all af-
6. fected shippers in the state.

7. We should work with railroad companies to ensure
8. that rail cars are available in critical areas during
9. harvest seasons. We support the enhancement and
10. improvement of short line railroads.

11. We support legislation prohibiting railroad com-
12. panies from closing crossings that allow access to
13. private land without public hearings.

14. We recommend legislation to ensure a clear view
26. of trains approaching crossings in rural areas. The
27. clearing and maintaining of trees, weeds and trash,
28. for a minimum of 300 feet on both sides of crossing
29. should be maintained.

30. Railroad companies, and state and county gov-
31. ernments should coordinate efforts to ensure that
32. crossings on state and county roads have flashing
33. lights and/or cross arms when feasible.

34. Railroad companies and state and county govern-
35. ments should coordinate efforts to make railroad
36. crossings more passable by long equipment, ma-
37. chinery, and trucks to prevent high-centering on
38. the tracks.

39. Railroads or owners of abandoned rail rights-of-
40. way should be required to provide landowners access
41. to their property without charge.

42. High speed rail transportation should be studied
43. and if determined to be feasible should be pursued
44. using existing rail and highway rights-of-way. High
45. speed rail construction should not decrease agri-
46. cultural productivity or decrease property values
47. without compensation to encourage continued and
48. future active agriculture production. Yearly royalty
49. should be paid as long as the line is present. High
50. speed rail construction in new rights-of-way should
51. not limit access to private property.

Farm Machinery 161

1. Farmers and ranchers should be allowed to legally
2. operate an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) on a public road
3. when the ATV has proper lighting, a pop-it flag or
4. similar device and is being used in conjunction with
5. agricultural work.

6. Farmers and ranchers should be allowed to legally
7. operate farm machinery and other motor vehicles
8. used for farm and ranch operation on public roads
9. without any special license requirements.

10. We oppose mandatory titling of farm trailers and
11. agriculture equipment.

12. Driver's education and defensive driving classes
13. should emphasize the safety of sharing roads with
14. farm equipment.

Truck Transportation 162

1. We support the following steps to make our trans-
2. portation system usable and efficient:

3. 1. Reasonable farm truck driver qualification

4. regulations should be adopted.
5. 2. Legislation should be enacted allowing raw agricultural commodities to move without permits with a
6. 10% variance over gross weight, without axle weight
7. limitations, on trucks licensed within Texas from the
8. place of harvest to the first point of processing.
9. 3. Semi-truck licensing should be provided at
10. one-half price for farm use and registration should
11. be allowed for seasonal use.
12. 4. The state should grant permits and licenses to
13. custom harvesters to transport agricultural machinery
14. at reduced cost.
15. 5. Farm trailers not exceeding 12,000 pounds
16. gross weight should be permitted to operate without
17. a license.
18. 6. Rollbars and safety belts on farm tractors should
19. not be required.
20. 7. We favor increasing weight limits for trucks
21. hauling ag and forestry products including individual
22. axle weight limitations to compensate for the increased
23. cost of transportation. Only state and federal
24. DOT officers should enforce trucking weight laws.
25. Road and bridge damage, caused by normal road
26. use, should not be assessed to legally loaded trucks.
27. 8. We support the continuation of 2060 permits
28. for trucks.
29. 9. We support legislation allowing farm equipment,
30. trailers or trucks, and hay bales that are within
31. Texas Department of Transportation width and
32. weight requirements to be moved without a permit
33. within a 100-mile radius during daylight hours. This
34. exemption should include implement dealers or their
35. agents only when equipment is being moved to or
36. from a farm.
37. 10. We recommend the exemption of safety bumpers
38. on module trucks, grain trucks and all agricultural
39. vehicles.
40. 11. A system which allows agricultural products to
41. be transported via interstate access roads from field
42. to processing point by the most direct route without
43. violating state and farm-to-market highway laws. A
44. CDL holder accused of a moving violation in a vehicle
45. not requiring a CDL should be subject to the same
46. penalties as a non-CDL motorist.
47. We support allowing licensed drivers legal status
48. to haul their own farm products and equipment
49. anywhere in the state of Texas.
50. We support farm operators being added to the list
51. of business types that can have drivers use the Farm-
52. Related Service Industry (FRSI) Waiver program.
53. Farm truck operators should be exempt from non-
54. critical DOT regulations including log-keeping. We
55. urge the State to keep the counties informed of all
56. state licensing and weight regulations.
57. We recommend that trucks hauling ag products
- 58.

59. be allowed to continue to travel weight-restricted
60. roadways and bridges in the event that alternative
61. routes are not available. We support access to all
62. state and federal highways by loaded cotton module
63. trucks. We recommend that all bridges and roads be
64. upgraded to handle 80,000 pound loads.

65. We recommend the mileage limits be eliminated
66. on farm trucks.

67. We urge that TxDOT remove the 150 mile limita-
68. tion on transporting agriculture commodities with
69. farm license plate(s).

70. We support legislation that would allow farmers
71. to provide or exchange services with other farmers
72. within a 150 mile radius of the servicing farmers' ag-
73. ricultural operation without losing their agriculture
74. exempt status under the transportation code.

75. We support continuing to allow commercial semi-
76. trucks to haul farm tag trailers with farm products
77. to processing facilities. We suggest that commercial
78. driver's licenses not be required and state and federal
79. regulations be relaxed in order that farmers be al-
80. lowed to transport farm fuel trailers and other plac-
81. ardable materials on public roads in a safe, practical
82. and affordable manner.

83. We oppose any governmental activities, not
84. specifically initiated by the Legislature, restricting
85. commercial vehicle access to agricultural products.
86. Allowable gross vehicle weights should be the same
87. for county roads as for state and federal highways.

88. We support the strict enforcement of a uniform
89. system of trucking regulations and policies between
90. Texas, Mexico and Canada to expedite the movement
91. of commerce.

92. Farm equipment required to be registered for
93. highway use should have the option to be registered
94. for seasonal use.

95. We support legislation waiving weight and size
96. limits for trucks during weather related emergencies.

97. We support regulations and legislation allowing
98. over-width and over-height trucks to operate on
99. toll roads under the same regulations as interstate
100. highways.

Water Transportation 163

1. We oppose the disposal of dredging materials from
2. public waterways on Class I, II and III lands without
3. proper compensation. The State of Texas should
4. encourage improvements to its ports including, but
5. not limited to, deepening and/or widening projects
6. of ship channels in order to make Texas agricultural
7. exports more competitive.

GOVERNMENT

State Constitution

164

1. The maintenance of strong, independent, and responsible state and local government is essential to
2. the preservation of self-government and individual
3. freedoms. Our present state constitution is sound
4. and should be maintained. Any desired changes
5. can be made by the people through the amendment
6. process already in existence; therefore, we request
7. that wording on amendment ballots be written in
8. laymen's language.
- 9.
10. If a new state constitution is proposed by the
11. Legislature, a separate vote should be taken on each
12. article and section for ratification.
13. We strongly oppose initiative and referendum.
14. Rules governing compensation of members of
15. the Texas Legislature should be a part of the state
16. constitution.
17. State and county officials should continue to be
18. elected according to the present elective system.
19. Authority for redistricting should remain vested in
20. the state constitution.
21. We support term limits of 12 years for state legis-
22. lators; however, if term limitations are passed, there
23. should be no restriction against running for the same
24. office after sitting out one term.
25. The Office of Governor should encompass a four-
26. year term. The Governor's authority should include
27. the following:
 1. Item by item veto power over the budget.
 2. Appointive power of agency heads and board
28. members with advice and consent of the Senate.
- 29.
30. There should be no deficit spending in state gov-
31. ernment.
32. The Texas Constitution shall be amended to define
33. marriage as: the union between one man and one
34. woman as husband and wife. The word spouse refers
35. only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband
36. or a wife. Civil unions and domestic partnerships
37. or any other substitute for marriage shall not be
38. recognized as legal in Texas.
- 39.

Texas Legislature

165

1. We support adoption by the Texas Legislature of
2. a reapportionment plan which will ensure the maxi-
3. mum representation of rural Texas.
4. The present requirement of biennial sessions of
5. the Texas Legislature should be continued, with these
6. sessions limited to 140 days. The Governor's power
7. to call special sessions should be retained but not
8. expanded beyond its present limits.
9. New state laws or proposed amendments should
10. refer to a single subject, and legislators should prac-

11. tice restraints in introducing new laws. The Texas
12. House and Senate should continue to prohibit the
13. attachment of a rider or an amendment to proposed
14. legislation when the rider or amendment is not ger-
15. mane to the subject of the proposed bill. A thorough
16. study must be made to confirm there is a problem or
17. a danger to the environment before an environmental
18. bill passes the state legislature.

19. We urge the Texas Legislature to record each and
20. every vote taken during the session so that every
21. vote cast will be a matter of public record. We rec-
22. ommend enforcement of rules requiring legislators
23. to be present when bills are voted upon, except in
24. case of emergency.

25. We recommend that a state legislator who is also
26. an attorney not be granted a trial continuation on any
27. case in which he or she represents a client, solely on
28. the basis of his or her being a member of the Texas
29. Legislature, unless the legislature is in session.

30. We support legislation that requires legislators’
31. health insurance, retirement benefits, tax breaks or
32. pay increases be voted on by the people.

33. We support the law prohibiting former legislators
34. and former staff members from accepting employ-
35. ment with businesses seeking state contracts for
36. a period of two years after they leave government
37. service.

38. All special interest legislation should be opposed
39. which is designed to give special groups competitive
40. advantages through creation of legal monopolies or
41. franchises, or legal price fixing. A Fair Trades Act or
42. any other similar law should not be enacted.

43. We favor legislation designating English as the
44. official language of Texas. We believe no individual
45. has the right to demand government services in a
46. language other than English.

47. The State Song should remain “Texas, Our Texas.”

48. We oppose the creation of additional legal state
49. holidays without approval by a referendum of the
50. voters of the State of Texas.

51. We support death certificates being public record.

52. Funding for the operation of agencies and the
53. programs administered by these agencies should
54. be by appropriations from the Texas Legislature to
55. ensure strict legislative oversight. Any fee-based
56. revenue enhancing measures granted to an agency or
57. department by the Legislature must have the same
58. legislative oversight as that of appropriated funds.
59. User fees should remain with the collecting agency
60. and not go into the general fund. We urge the Texas
61. Legislature to not assess any more fees on agriculture
62. products other than fees for commodity referendums
63. passed by agriculture producers.

64. We oppose any excessive fees for State licensing
65. of small businesses.
66. We oppose legislation of unfunded mandates for
67. local government.
68. We support a law where consumers must give
69. written permission for their information to be sold.
70. We support legislation that would withhold all
71. state funds from any local governmental entity which
72. is serving as a “sanctuary” for undocumented persons.
73. We oppose illegal aliens qualifying for tuition
74. discounts.
75. We oppose the rampant escalation of the cost
76. of tuition and fees at state supported colleges and
77. universities.
78. We urge the Texas Legislature to keep the original
79. names of the universities in the Texas State Univer-
80. sity system.
81. We urge the Texas Legislature to rescind any
82. previous calls for a U.S. Constitutional Convention
83. and defeat any new bills calling for a “Con – Con”
84. U.S. Constitutional Convention. Be it an Article V
85. convention, a convention of the States or whatever
86. it might be called.
87. We oppose any and all calls for a constitutional
88. convention, with the purpose to amend or change the
89. U.S. Constitution signed September 17, 1787.

Executive Department 166

1. Paperwork reduction should be required in all
2. levels of government.
3. Farmers and ranchers should be adequately rep-
4. resented on all state boards or commissions which
5. relate to agriculture. Regulations or orders adopted
6. by such boards or commissions must be both practical
7. and workable. The Governor’s office should appoint
8. and maintain an entity, composed of agricultural pro-
9. ducers, to coordinate activities among all state agen-
10. cies involved in agriculture within the State of Texas
11. to prevent duplicating and overlapping of services.
12. We support policy requiring governmental agencies
13. and public institutions, including public schools and
14. state prisons, to purchase Texas agricultural products
15. whenever possible.
16. We recommend that user fees be charged to indi-
17. viduals or businesses only for those services which
18. primarily benefit the individual or business. Services
19. which render primarily a public benefit, such as
20. standardization, quality, health, safety and related
21. values, should be provided at public cost. We favor
22. cost effective privatization of as many state services
23. as possible.
24. Although we defend the rights of all citizens to
25. complain to their regulatory agencies, we vigorously
26. oppose the complainant’s abuse of privilege. There-
27. fore, legislative action should be taken to limit onsite

28. inspections of the same nature by regulatory agencies
29. to one complaint per annum. Thereafter, the com-
30. plainant will pay for inspection costs incurred by the
31. defendant and agencies for the same type complaint,
32. unless the complaint proves to be a permit violation.
33. When permits are required by a regulatory agency,
34. the procedural rule requiring a public hearing will be
35. enforced only if the protester appears at the hearing.

36. Parties who have been injured by administrative
37. directives or regulatory decisions of governmental
38. agencies should have the right to an appeal and a
39. trial by jury, and legislation should be enacted to
40. that end. We support legislation stating that anyone
41. who wishes to sue a public entity must bear his own
42. legal expense.

43. The State of Texas should have incentives to re-
44. tain competent attorneys and a statute prohibiting
45. former employees of the Attorney General's office
46. from working on cases they worked on as employees
47. of the Attorney General.

Judiciary 167

1. The present judicial system should be retained
2. and judges of the Supreme Court, courts of civil and
3. criminal appeals, and district and county courts
4. should be elected. County and municipal judges and
5. justices of the peace should be elected by the people,
6. but need not meet the qualifications of an attorney.
7. All fees received by municipal judges and justices
8. of the peace should be turned over to the county
9. or state for revenue rather than being retained for
10. personal income.

11. We favor requiring judges to limit themselves to
12. strictly interpreting laws.

13. The plaintiff should be required to pay legal fees
14. for the defendant when the court finds in favor of
15. the defendant in civil cases. In the case of frivolous
16. civil lawsuit, the plaintiff(s) and his lawyer(s) should
17. be required to pay all legal fees and court costs for
18. the defendant(s) when the court finds in favor of
19. the defendant(s). We favor disbaring lawyers who
20. continually bring frivolous lawsuits. We support the
21. legislature's definition and prohibition of frivolous
22. lawsuits.

Counties 168

1. We recommend that counties be given limited zon-
2. ing authority for housing and subdivisions. If coun-
3. ties are given land use authority, agricultural areas
4. should be protected as production areas not unlike
5. industrial parks. This would allow the counties to
6. limit residential construction in agricultural zones.

7. We are opposed to any requirements for building
8. permits for any type of building or other construction
9. of improvements on farms and ranches in pursuit

10. of commercial agriculture in rural areas. We are
11. opposed to county fire codes applying to a building
12. or structure used for an agricultural operation, as
13. defined by Section 251.002 of the Texas Agricultural
14. Code, unless the county has adopted a fire code be-
15. fore December 1, 2015. We will support legislation to
16. give counties ordinance-making powers over rural
17. subdivisions whether or not they are sold by plats
18. or metes and bounds. The counties should have
19. the power through their commissioners courts to
20. require developers and/or sub-dividers to provide
21. proper drainage, roads, water service, and provision
22. for sewer service.

23. We support legislation which would give the
24. county commissioners court ordinance-making
25. authority to control the sale and use of fireworks
26. within rural areas of the county.

27. We support a temporary process for counties to
28. take possession of roads the county has maintained
29. since before 1971. The process will expire two years
30. after the date the legislation becomes law. The pro-
31. cess should include proper notice to landowners, and
32. the opportunity to protest the county taking posses-
33. sion of the road.

34. Landowners should not be liable for attempting
35. to repair a county road that has fallen into disrepair.

36. We oppose sending funds that remain in a county's
37. mandated indigent health care account to the state
38. at the end of the year.

39. We oppose enactment of a countywide leash law,
40. which would require all dogs to be penned or tethered.

41. We support notifying adjacent landowners of any
42. new development plat approved by County Commis-
43. sioners Court.

Cities

169

1. We support legislation to repeal the law which
2. gives cities the right of extraterritorial jurisdiction.
3. We support legislation to provide that no unincorpor-
4. ated area may be annexed unless the annexation
5. is approved by a two-thirds majority vote of electors
6. in the area to be annexed. Agricultural land that is
7. annexed into the city limits should be exempt from
8. city code requirements such as electrical standards
9. for farm buildings and permits or fees to burn brush.
10. City standards should not apply to farm and ranch
11. activities and structures.

12. Cities must provide all normal city services to
13. annexed areas within two years of annexation, or
14. de-annex all of the area for which cities are unable
15. to provide normal services. We favor legislation
16. restricting cities from collecting city property taxes
17. on the extension of municipal boundaries until such
18. time as full city services are provided to the affected
19. annexed areas. In areas de-annexed because of city

20. failure to provide normal services, all taxes or other
21. revenue collected from the people must be returned
22. to them. No further effort may be made to again
23. annex such areas for a period of not less than four
24. years from the date of de-annexation. We oppose
25. limited-purpose annexation. All land that has been
26. annexed under limited-purpose annexation should
27. be de-annexed. Cities should be prohibited from an-
28. nexing agricultural land not adjacent to developed
29. land within the city limits.

30. If cities own properties outside of their jurisdic-
31. tion, they should pay normal taxes.

32. No municipality should annex or extend their
33. extraterritorial jurisdiction onto agricultural land
34. without the written consent of the landowner and
35. compensation for any property rights restriction.
36. When municipalities propose extending their extra-
37. territorial jurisdictions, all landowners are to be noti-
38. fied in writing at least two weeks prior to any action.

Elections and Voting 170

1. We believe campaign reform can best be achieved
2. by strict enforcement of the current campaign laws,
3. and we oppose any change that will restrict or cur-
4. tail the right of an individual citizen or any group
5. of citizens to express themselves as guaranteed by
6. the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. We
7. recommend establishing a cap on funds expended
8. toward election to a political office, including “pay-
9. ment in kind” contributions.

10. To preserve the electoral process, each voter
11. should be required to be able to read and write,
12. understand the English language, and furnish proof
13. of U.S. citizenship, photo ID, and should be present
14. during the actual registration process, with excep-
15. tions permitting spouses to register for each other
16. and a provision exempting members of the Armed
17. Forces from this requirement. All voters should be
18. required to show a Government issued, tamper re-
19. sistant photo ID when voting. College or university
20. students should be required to establish their voting
21. residence and register to vote in the same manner as
22. all other citizens. Furthermore, in community, state,
23. or national elections, students who receive part or all
24. of their financial support from their parents should
25. be permitted to vote only in the voting district of
26. their parents.

27. We recommend that changes be made in the regu-
28. lar absentee and absentee mail-in ballot and voting
29. procedure to eliminate fraud and excess cost. We
30. favor county clerks notifying the voter registration
31. clerks in their county of information received from
32. death certificates.

33. The county and/or state should bear the cost of all
34. primary elections, and candidates should be required

35. to pay a nominal filing fee. Timing of Primary elec-
36. tions should be held no later than January 31st of
37. the election year. We support the repeal of Section
38. 162.015 of the Texas Election Code that makes a
39. person who voted in a primary election ineligible for
40. nomination by another political party other than the
41. party holding the primary in which the person voted.

42. We support holding the presidential primary in
43. conjunction with the state primary.

44. Special elections should be eliminated, and all is-
45. sues to be voted on should be included in the general
46. election; however, if the practice of permitting special
47. elections is continued, petitioners calling for a special
48. election should bear the cost of such election.

49. We oppose automatic straight party ticket voting
50. on ballots in general elections and recommend bal-
51. lots be changed to encourage voters to consider each
52. candidate.

53. We favor repealing the present law that permits
54. certain candidates to seek more than one elective
55. office simultaneously.

56. Lawyers who have presented cases or have cases
57. pending in a judicial candidate's court should be
58. prohibited from making election contributions to that
59. judicial candidate.

60. We urge the Texas Legislature to exempt local and
61. county elected officials, in counties with less than
62. 10,000 population, from the requirement of declar-
63. ing political party affiliation, thus eliminating the
64. effect of straight line party voting and the problems
65. of conducting a local primary election.

66. We oppose internet voting in any local or statewide
67. election, except for activated reserve and active duty
68. military who are not stationed at their permanent
69. address area.

70. We favor printing a hard copy of votes cast via
71. electronic voting machines to help in recounting and
72. in reducing fraud.

73. We oppose any effort to allow non-citizens or pris-
74. oners the right to vote in any elections.

75. We urge the Texas Secretary of State to consis-
76. tently and vigorously enforce the election laws of the
77. state; specifically, the requirement that party chairs
78. post notices of County and Precinct conventions in
79. a timely manner, and necessary materials are ready
80. for these conventions.

Public Officials

171

1. A high moral standard should be a prerequisite
2. for all elected and appointed officials, and no one
3. should be permitted to run for public office if they
4. have a criminal record. We recommend mandatory
5. drug testing of elected public officials. We recommend
6. the dismissal of any public employee who is proven
7. to be an active user of illegal drugs. There should
8. also be legislation requiring that any state, county

9. or local office holder, whether elected or appointed,
10. be automatically relieved of his duties while under
11. indictment by a grand jury. Elected or appointed
12. public officials who have been found guilty of fraud
13. or misconduct while in office should not be allowed
14. to receive pensions or retirement benefits pertaining
15. to that office. This should in no way affect or reflect
16. on an official's rights and privileges under the law
17. as a private citizen.

18. We support a retirement system for elected state
19. office holders based on their average salary while
20. serving as an elected official, and not on the salary
21. of a full-time state employee.

22. We recommend that any person who is delinquent
23. in payment of local property taxes be barred from
24. holding any public office.

25. We recommend that the state constitution and
26. statutes be amended to provide for early retirement
27. of disabled state or county officials who can no longer
28. perform their sworn duties.

29. Persons holding public elective office should resign
30. when they seek any other elective office.

31. We recommend that every elected official serve
32. his term of office at the salary being paid at the
33. time of his election to that office, and that any sal-
34. ary increases and fringe benefits for elected public
35. officials be voted on by the people. We recommend
36. that all elected officials receive pay raises only after
37. they have served one term in office and are re-elected.

38. Elected and appointed officials of state govern-
39. ment should be audited periodically. The Attorney
40. General should audit expense accounts on all state
41. officials, and charge back all expenses to individuals
42. that are not on official business. We recommend that
43. elected officials not spend tax dollars for promotion
44. for a proposed resolution or amendment.

45. Any elected or appointed government official who
46. is an attorney, who receives funds from a state agency
47. or subdivision of the state, should not be able to act as
48. plaintiff's attorney in any case where the defendant
49. is a state agency or subdivision of the state.

50. State Legislators should not be allowed to raise
51. their pay, benefits, or pension unless legislation is
52. introduced and passed in an independent bill that
53. exclusively addresses this issue.

54. We support a selection process for the Texas
55. Transportation Commission that will ensure their
56. accountability.

57. We support transparency in state government and
58. an effective Public Information Act.

Government Spending 172

1. Legislators should be required to submit estimated
2. cost and source of revenue of any bill they introduce.
3. Any additional requests for appropriations should,

4. if at all possible, be accompanied by a suggested
5. source of revenue. The concept of “revenue sharing”
6. should not be implemented. No increases in budget
7. should be authorized by the Legislature unless rules
8. and regulations found in the Texas Constitution are
9. complied with by the Legislative Budget Board.

10. We support the judicious management of the Texas
11. Economic Stabilization Fund (Rainy Day Fund) to
12. protect Texas against future emergencies. Safe-
13. guards must be maintained to prevent authorized
14. expenditures during one budget cycle from requiring
15. a supplemental appropriation in the next budget cycle
16. to cover those expenses. The Fund should not be used
17. to establish programs with recurring expenses. The
18. Fund should only be used for purposes which provide
19. broad public benefit, such as transportation.

20. When programs or regulations are mandated by
21. the Texas Legislature, by a state agency or by execu-
22. tive order, full funding should be provided by the state
23. and not local entities.

24. State agencies should be encouraged not to spend
25. their allotted money at the end of the year to avoid
26. funding year cuts. State agencies should be com-
27. mended for not spending their entire budget.

28. To restrict state indebtedness, we recommend
29. legislation limiting issuance of bonds to fund state
30. expenditures.

31. We support the Texas Enterprise Fund.

32. Money spent on advertising the lottery should be
33. reduced to the amount needed for the point of sale
34. material and the drawings.

35. We propose that local construction projects funded
36. by taxpayer money be contracted to U.S. owned
37. companies.

38. We oppose automatic pay raises for state employ-
39. ees. All state employees should be required by law
40. to pay their share of social security tax.

41. We recommend implementation of the following
42. goals, intended to reduce and control welfare spend-
43. ing within the State of Texas:

44. 1. Stopping the upward trend of state expenditures
45. for welfare.

46. 2. Prohibiting the use of state funds for soliciting
47. welfare recipients.

48. 3. Establishing a local citizens committee appoint-
49. ed by commissioner’s court to determine eligibility
50. and/or need of welfare applicants.

51. 4. Charging all welfare costs to the Department
52. of Health and Human Services.

53. 5. Requiring all able-bodied recipients of welfare
54. assistance to work for local government units (city,
55. county and state) to the extent that their labor val-
56. ued at minimum prevailing wages for the local area
57. earns the value of the products or payments received.

58. 6. Requiring county clerks to keep a record of the
59. names of those recommending individuals for welfare

60. assistance.
61. 7. Maintaining the names of all those receiving
62. public welfare in the county clerks office as a matter
63. of public record.
64. 8. Prohibiting public welfare assistance, health
65. care, and free schooling to illegal residents.
66. 9. Providing public welfare to dependent children
67. only in ways which will discourage illegitimacy.
68. 10. Making persons ineligible for unemployment
69. compensation from any state if jobs are available at
70. the person's point of residence.
71. 11. Preventing recipients of old age assistance
72. payments from having their benefits reduced because
73. of their earnings from other sources.
74. 12. Requiring unemployment checks to be picked
75. up and signed for by recipient at the office nearest
76. his legal address, with no out of state mailings.
77. 13. Maintaining the level of assistance to the
78. elderly, the blind and the disabled.
79. 14. Prohibiting the use of tax monies for abortions.
80. 15. Prohibiting incentives for irresponsible family
81. planning. Requiring the father of a child born out of
82. wedlock to be identified for the purpose of financial
83. support of the child.
84. 16. Cutting off welfare and food stamps to families
85. with elementary school age children if the children do
86. not meet minimum state law attendance standards.
87. 17. Stopping all State aid to any recipient who
88. fails or refuses to take a mandatory drug test.
89. 18. Prohibiting the use of the Lone Star Card to
90. purchase soft drinks sweetened by natural or artifi-
91. cial ingredients.

Banking and Credit

173

1. We oppose any legislation that would encourage
2. elimination of locally owned and controlled banking
3. institutions.
4. We oppose any legislation that would allow any
5. banking institution to require the borrower to pur-
6. chase insurance from that institution or any other
7. specified agency or individual.
8. We are opposed to any further regulation of the
9. credit union banking industry.
10. Banks should be prohibited from requesting joint
11. payee checks to establish a line of credit when actual
12. borrowing will begin at a later date.
13. We oppose the laws that allow banks to legally
14. claim property that belongs to third parties while in
15. the process of foreclosing on their customers.
16. We support legislation to reform the bankruptcy
17. laws. We recommend laws that will prohibit bank-
18. ruptcy judges from using escrow accounts held for
19. royalty owners by banks for payment of any debts
20. owed by the company. The original owner of any

21. commodity, natural or mineral resource should have
22. first priority for payment in bankruptcy settlements
23. or in other litigation.

24. We favor protection for all homesteads. This pro-
25. tection should include prohibitions on cross-collater-
26. alization of homestead property and nonconsensual
27. liens on homestead property. We oppose any change
28. in the homestead protections provided in the state
29. Constitution. We oppose any change in the original
30. Home Equity Lending provisions that would weaken
31. the protections and safeguards in the law adopted by
32. the state. Any change in the Homestead Law should
33. be approved by the voters of the state.

34. We propose legislation that would allow continu-
35. ation of agricultural valuation on land, part of which
36. is used as collateral to refinance a home by FNMA
37. or FHA.

38. We recommend that the licensing and bonding
39. regulations be strengthened to protect farmers and
40. ranchers using accepted business practices in the sale
41. of agricultural products or in storage of such products
42. in private or public storage facilities.

43. Agricultural lien searches should be conducted
44. at the County Clerk's office instead of the Secretary
45. of States Uniform Commercial Code Division. We
46. support the current method of pre-notification of a
47. farm lien or mortgage on sellers products and oppose
48. attempts to change the current procedure. We urge
49. legislation that will require lenders to file a lien re-
50. lease with the Secretary of State within 30 days. The
51. UCC filing fee should be paid by lending institutions
52. and not by the borrower.

53. We favor making the Young Farmer Loan Guar-
54. antee Program available to young producers for the
55. benefit of Texas agriculture. We support legislative
56. revisions to broaden the program's usefulness. We op-
57. pose funds being diverted to other areas or programs.

58. The drafting of rules and regulations implement-
59. ing the Farm and Ranch Finance Program should
60. contain safeguards to ensure that only bona fide
61. farmers and ranchers be eligible to participate.

62. We favor an aggressive program for the collection
63. of student loans financed by the issuance of state
64. bonds.

65. We oppose colleges and universities from provid-
66. ing students names and addresses for credit card
67. solicitations.

Disaster Assistance Programs 174

1. We support legislation to reimburse agricultural
2. producers for loss of agricultural inputs caused by
3. natural disasters.

EDUCATION

Administration

175

1. We recommend that the State Board of Education
2. continue to be an elected board.

3. We oppose compulsory collective bargaining rights
4. for teachers. Convicted sex offenders or illegal drug
5. users should not be employed in any tax supported
6. institution of education.

7. We favor public education being compulsory
8. through 16 years of age. We support a system which
9. permits parents and students to determine if the
10. student will enter a career and technical education
11. program or take college readiness courses with rea-
12. sonable options to prepare for both contingencies, or
13. to switch options when necessary.

14. We are opposed to the move toward doing away
15. with the designation of the sexes in our schools, and
16. the differences should be respected.

17. We recommend that any student participating
18. in a riot or subversive action shall lose his right to
19. any government loan or grant-in-aid for the purpose
20. of education. Administrators should be required to
21. report any criminal activity by a student or employee
22. to the proper authorities in order to protect the stu-
23. dent body from such criminal acts. Schools and their
24. administrators should have the authority to punish
25. students that commit an infraction on school grounds
26. and on school-related activities.

27. We support the right of any parents or guardians
28. or their representative groups to visit and monitor
29. school classes at any time without prior notice of such
30. visit after going through proper school administra-
31. tive channels. School administrations should actively
32. involve more parents in all aspects of the educational
33. system. This will open lines of communication be-
34. tween the administration and parents, and result in
35. better education for the students.

36. We oppose legislation that gives any public school
37. employee the right to help obtain an abortion for a
38. minor child.

39. We urge Texas Education Agency (TEA) to provide
40. more information to the legislature regarding the
41. effects of a school voucher system on school districts
42. in the State of Texas.

43. We recommend adoption of legislation which
44. would uphold the rights of parents to send their
45. children to the school of their choice, and which would
46. maintain the present status of private and parochial
47. schools free from control by state government. We
48. support local control of the Independent School Dis-
49. trict system in Texas.

50. We oppose any participation by the state in the
51. proposed expansion of the "Race to the Top" grant
52. program or similar programs, including Common

53. Core and C-Scope, which would turn local control of
 54. school districts over to the federal government via a
 55. list of mandates and thereby jeopardizing accepted
 56. customs, traditional values, and parental influence.
 57. We support giving local school boards the author-
 58. ity to develop curriculum that teaches vocational and
 59. technical skills instead of current required basics to
 60. students who are not college bound
 61. We support efficient use of staff resources to pro-
 62. mote maximum utilization of property taxes.
 63. We oppose the “Zero Tolerance” policy. Each event
 64. requiring action by the administration or school board
 65. should be considered and judged on its own merits.
 66. Texas should opt out of the “No Child Left Behind”
 67. Act of 2001.
 68. All school campuses, (elementary, middle, and high
 69. school), in the State of Texas should be equipped with
 70. a defibrillator to be available at all times for use by
 71. trained personnel.
 72. Rural multi-county school districts should be
 73. exempt from election laws that prevent them from
 74. holding yearly elections at one location within their
 75. district.

Finance

176

1. The State of Texas should assume responsibility
 2. for total financing of the Minimum Foundation School
 3. Program; however, the local independent school dis-
 4. tricts should be permitted, by local option, to provide
 5. for local enrichment programs above and beyond the
 6. fully funded State mandated programs. We oppose
 7. any increase in the local fund assignment.
 8. We oppose mandates by the state that are not
 9. funded by the state.
 10. We support the Legislature, rather than the courts,
 11. determining the method of allocating state funds
 12. among school districts. We oppose any school fund-
 13. ing system requiring small school districts that are
 14. barely able to offer enough basic courses to meet state
 15. accreditation standards being taxed to support large
 16. urban schools that offer advanced courses in science,
 17. mathematics and languages.
 18. The State of Texas should not appropriate local
 19. school districts monies from local districts tax base
 20. to finance other school districts.
 21. As long as the present plan of school financing is in
 22. effect, we favor a requirement that all receiving dis-
 23. tricts set their tax rate as high as the highest rate of
 24. a giving district. Redistribution of school taxes should
 25. take into account the percentage of taxes collected.
 26. Taxes from districts with high percentage collection
 27. rate should not be redistributed to districts with a
 28. lower percentage collection rate. If an ad valorem
 29. tax system is used to fund local school districts, we
 30. support the \$1.00 per \$100 cap on the tax rate for

31. maintenance and operation of schools.

32. We support the permanent school fund being uti-
33. lized only for the original purpose of funding public
34. schools.

35. We oppose borrowing from or making loans
36. against the Teachers' Retirement Fund or the Per-
37. manent University Fund.

38. We support an alternative source of revenue to
39. fund public school operations that would be more
40. equitable and spread the tax load across the entire
41. population rather than on property owners alone.

42. We support agricultural use valuation and sales tax
43. exemptions for all agricultural inputs and services,
44. including feed, seed, fertilizer and farm machinery.

45. We oppose the consolidation of any public school
46. district in this state with one or more other school
47. districts unless approved by a majority vote in each
48. district. We oppose the decrease of funds to small
49. school districts in order to force them to consolidate
50. with larger districts. We support the right of local
51. citizens, by petition, to secure an annual external
52. audit of a state funded school district.

Program

177

1. We pledge continued efforts to strengthen public
2. and private schools to improve educational opportu-
3. nities for all students. We support the best possible
4. balance of efficiency and economy in our school sys-
5. tems with primary control in the hands of local school
6. districts. Primary emphasis should be on teaching
7. academic skills and knowledge in the core subjects
8. of math, science, social studies, and language arts.
9. Required curriculum should include American his-
10. tory and geography, the U.S. Constitution, Texas Con-
11. stitution, Bill of Rights, and economics, emphasizing
12. the free enterprise system. We support a minimum
13. requirement of 30 minutes of physical education for
14. all students, grades K-6th, to develop a stronger mind
15. and body. We support a no-pass, no-play policy. We
16. support the passing of competency tests for all high
17. school seniors as a requirement for graduation. We
18. support local control of student participation in non-
19. school activities.

20. Before being approved for use in public schools,
21. online curriculum management systems that have
22. been adopted by the State Board of Education
23. should be subject to a public review process similar
24. to our state-adopted textbooks. Local school districts
25. should not be allowed to use state funds to purchase
26. non-approved instructional materials. Support of
27. educational curriculum programs should be the re-
28. sponsibility of the local district when local revenue is
29. used to fund the programs. Strict discipline should
30. be enforced and strong moral and spiritual values
31. should be stressed in every subject and activity. In

32. order to achieve this goal, our teachers must have
33. the authority to control their students and be paid
34. a fair salary. Teachers should be allowed to paddle
35. disruptive students before an adult witness.

36. Local school boards should retain authority in
37. determining curriculum, textbook selection, financ-
38. ing, discipline, dress code and other matters which
39. can be dealt with most effectively at the local level.
40. We support the regular recitation in public schools
41. of the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the U.S. flag using the
42. English language.

43. We oppose the teaching of homosexuality as an
44. alternative lifestyle, the legalization of same sex
45. marriages, homosexual adoption or child custodial
46. rights and special entitlements or privileges based
47. on sexual preference.

48. Rather than promoting safe sex in our schools,
49. AIDS education should emphasize the teaching of
50. morality and sexual restraint as the best safeguard
51. against the deadly disease AIDS. We support and
52. encourage the enforcement of Texas laws prohibiting
53. sodomy. We support legislation that prevents another
54. committee being formed such as the Adolescent Preg-
55. nancy and Parenting Advisory Council (APPAC).

56. We recommend implementing anti-drug education
57. throughout the educational process in public and
58. private schools, beginning at the kindergarten level.

59. We favor students having the right to miss school
60. to participate in livestock shows and fairs.

61. We favor voluntary student transfer from one
62. school district to another. We oppose compulsory bi-
63. lingual education. We are opposed to teaching ethnic
64. grammar and speech in our public school system.

65. All pre-school child development programs shall
66. be controlled by the private sector, at the local level,
67. giving parents freedom of choice over the physical
68. and philosophical environment of their children.
69. Such government mandated programs are expensive
70. to taxpayers, destructive of individual rights and lo-
71. cal control, and add little or nothing to excellence in
72. public school education.

73. We favor evolution being taught as a theory and
74. not a fact in our public schools and that the creation
75. account from Genesis be given equal emphasis.

76. We recommend that the Bible and God be put back
77. in our schools as the rightful heritage of children as
78. a nation under God. We support the right of students
79. to mention God in school, give thanks to Him, tell
80. of His influence upon their life and to assemble on
81. school grounds to pray or read the Bible as long as it
82. doesn't interfere with scheduled classes.

83. We support a moment of silence or individual
84. prayer be allowed for all students.

85. We are opposed to any psychological tests and/or
86. questionnaires as approved by the Texas Education
87. Agency, which pry into private and personal family

88. lives under the guise of “progressive education.” We
89. will support legislation prohibiting this program.

90. Agriculture is vital to a sound economy, national
91. security and food safety. We encourage all public
92. schools to stress the importance of American ag-
93. riculture. We recommend the Texas Legislature
94. implement an annual Agriculture Appreciation Day,
95. in conjunction with public schools.

96. We support continued state and local school dis-
97. trict funding for agriculture education and leadership
98. programs vital to leadership needs in the food and
99. fiber industry. We support agriculture based cur-
100. riculum in all public schools.

101. We recommend that the Texas Education Agency
102. support career and technology classes designed to
103. prepare students for employment.

104. We support expansion and modifications to career
105. and technical education campuses in the State of
106. Texas. We support state and national funding assis-
107. tance for these programs to include adult learners
108. and free tuition for high school age students who are
109. legal citizens of the United States and permanent
110. residents of Texas.

111. We recommend that the Texas Education Agency
112. support career and technical education courses
113. which teach personal, employable, and workforce
114. readiness skills to all students to prepare them for
115. college, technical school, or the workforce after high
116. school graduation.

117. We recommend that the State Board of Education
118. and the Texas Education Agency develop and support
119. career and technical education curriculum that will
120. count for a math and/or science on a student’s career
121. plan of study for graduation with the implementa-
122. tion of the 4x4.

123. We commend and endorse public school teachers
124. and officials in the use of prayer in the school room
125. and in public functions where they are in charge.

126. We recommend that local school boards and
127. administrators recognize and oppose the use of tax
128. dollars for the teaching of humanism, an atheistic ide-
129. ology, including that which comes into the classroom
130. through the use of values clarification and grouping.

131. Non-English speaking children educated with
132. taxpayer money should be placed in the classroom
133. according to academic ability without jeopardizing
134. the quality of education of English speaking students.

135. We support state-funded scholarships being based
136. on individual merit and need.

137. Student’s grades, classroom performance, teacher
138. evaluations and other criteria should be considered
139. for promotion or graduation. We oppose any state
140. mandated testing.

141. The Texas school system should reintroduce pen-
142. manship and mental mathematical computation in

143. the beginning grades of public schools.
144. We support a uniform start and end date for
145. schools so students can participate in college level
146. courses.

Teachers **178**

1. Any instructor or teacher who advocates violent
2. overthrow of the government of the United States,
3. should be fired and forfeit any remainder of their
4. contract.
5. We recommend to local public school boards and
6. school administrations that they maintain strict
7. standards in selecting qualified educators who sup-
8. port the American way of life and the United States
9. Constitution.
10. We support the concept of home schooling and the
11. right of parents or legal guardians to school their
12. children at home with a structured curriculum and
13. appropriate testing to determine progress.
14. We support reduction of paperwork required of
15. teachers.
16. We support probationary contracts for public
17. school teachers, administration and coaches.
18. We support alternative certification programs for
19. teachers.
20. We support state funded drug testing of all em-
21. ployees of tax-supported institutions and the test
22. results be placed in their employment record.
23. We recommend a firm policy be developed in Texas
24. educational systems to dismiss any teacher on any
25. teaching level who refuses to pledge allegiance to the
26. U.S. flag or those who belong to an Anti-American
27. group.
28. We support the standard that instructors at state-
29. supported educational institutions understand and
30. fluently speak the English language.

Textbooks **179**

1. We support continuation of the State Textbook
2. Advisory Committee.
3. We recommend that the Texas Farm Bureau con-
4. tinue textbook studies in order that proper protests
5. can be made to those texts which contain content
6. foreign to Farm Bureau philosophy and this informa-
7. tion be supplied to county Farm Bureau offices. The
8. State Board of Education should have the authority
9. to regulate the content of textbooks to assure they are
10. factual and based on current scientific information.
11. We oppose any textbook that promotes the
12. principles of a one-world government, teaches that
13. national sovereignty is no longer important, the Bill
14. of Rights is outdated, and that all nations should be
15. equal in the new global community.
16. We support textbooks that teach basic moral

17. values upon which our country was founded. There
18. should be no mention of alternative lifestyles re-
19. garding sexual behavior in school text books. There
20. should be no implication that such behavior is ap-
21. propriate. We recommend that American history
22. textbooks include accounts of our forefather's strong
23. belief in God and how it influenced their ability to
24. govern and form a nation.

25. We support accurate, unbiased, scientifically-
26. based textbooks and auxiliary materials. Informa-
27. tion, including environmental issues and animal care,
28. should be presented in a balanced, objective, unbiased
29. manner. Unproven theories should be designated
30. as such. No tax money should be used to institute
31. or promote programs that distort the facts about
32. agriculture and its good stewardship of the natural
33. resources of this state. We urge the State Board of
34. Education and all local school boards to reject any
35. such material.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Health 180

1. We support legislation designed to accomplish
2. the following:

3. 1. Requiring each prescription label on prescribed
4. medicines to show the generic and trade name.

5. 2. Requiring all companies writing hospitalization
6. insurance policies to guarantee renewal except for
7. nonpayment of premium or perpetration of fraud by
8. the insured.

9. 3. Authorizing additional facilities for training
10. physicians and surgeons.

11. 4. Continuing study of malpractice insurance for
12. the medical professions.

13. 5. We support legislation requiring blood tests for
14. people getting married.

15. 6. All employees who work in a nursing care
16. facility shall be randomly tested for both drugs and
17. alcohol.

18. 7. We recommend that all nursing care facilities
19. be inspected by certified inspectors.

20. We oppose a national health care plan. We urge
21. the Texas Legislature to pass legislation nullifying
22. and rejecting the "Patient Protection and Affordable
23. Care Act: (Public Law 111-148) and "Health Care
24. and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010" (Public
25. Law 111-152). We support Texas' lawsuit against
26. the recently passed health care legislation.

27. Nursing home and assisted living rates should be
28. uniform and not based on an individual's financial
29. statement.

30. The Texas Medical Board should maintain a list of

31. sanctioned physicians which can be made available
32. upon request.
33. We recommend that health care provided under
34. the indigent health care program be for bona fide
35. United States citizens only.
36. We recommend that the policy of "No Smoking" in
37. designated areas be enforced.
38. We support legislation that gives an unborn hu-
39. man being the right to life and protects the unborn.
40. The Peer Review Organization (PRO) of the Texas
41. Medical Foundation should be accountable to the
42. Texas Medical Board so that a doctor who is sanc-
43. tioned would have the right to appeal to the Texas
44. Medical Board.
45. We favor payments to rural hospitals by Medicare
46. equal to payments at large hospitals for the same
47. type hospitalizations.
48. We encourage our state legislators to modify rules
49. and regulations, and guidelines that discriminate
50. against rural medical care. Emphasis should be on
51. availability of quality medical care in remote areas.
52. Any patient who has tested positive for the HIV/
53. AIDS virus, or has reason to believe that he or
54. she may have been exposed to the virus, should be
55. required by law to reveal this fact to health care
56. workers prior to the beginning of treatment. Health
57. care workers who test positive for the HIV/AIDS
58. virus should be required, by law, to reveal this fact
59. to their patients. A person guilty of rape should be
60. required by law to take an AIDS test and have the
61. victim advised of the results.
62. We recommend that doctors, hospitals, and other
63. medical facilities send their bills for services rendered
64. and other charges to patients within 30 days.
65. We oppose legislation to legalize physician-assist-
66. ed suicide for anyone. We support the right of an
67. individual to refuse the use of life support machines.
68. We support the Organ Donor Program.
69. We support training and certification of Emer-
70. gency Medical Dispatchers.

Rural Living 181

1. We support a well-organized and practical rural
2. civil defense program.
3. We oppose telemarketing.
4. Texas should stay on Central Standard Time
5. throughout the year.
6. We oppose obscenity and pornography wherever
7. and in whatever form it may appear.
8. We support safety requirements for carnival and
9. amusement park rides. We support proper licensing
10. and insuring of persons furnishing carnival rides
11. to ensure the safety and protection of those using
12. their services.

13. We encourage all public outlets of gasoline to furnish restroom facilities and to supply air and water for their customers.

14. We support legislation that would prohibit the enforcement of flood-related building codes in non-flood plain areas.

15. Monies collected for the purpose of funding 9-1-1 emergency programs in rural areas should immediately be used for their originally intended purpose.

16. We support legislation that would make it unlawful for any firm or organization to release names, addresses or Social Security numbers of its members or subscribers without that persons permission. We support legislation which will preserve and restore the privacy rights of individuals. The Department of Agriculture and other state agencies should not release names of persons who are registered in their systems under the open records law.

17. We support volunteer fire departments in their efforts to maintain their volunteer status.

18. We support a plan initiated by Fire Departments and area agricultural producers that would adequately control wildfires.

19. We support changing state and federal wildfire policy to require that state and federal fire managers and incident commanders coordinate with county and local fire departments and landowners when acting as first responders and contributing to firefighting efforts. We support limiting personal liability for volunteer fire departments and private citizens for any actions, on either public or private property, related to fighting wildfires.

20. We oppose local or state governments imposing a tax or fee on the electronic transmission of information, i.e., e-mail or telephone.

21. We recommend that the Texas Farm Bureau support the Texas Department of Agriculture Texas Family Land Heritage Program. (This award is to honor Texas families who have owned and worked the same land for 100 years or more.)

22. We support increasing access to high speed internet connections in rural areas through any source, including wireless, by using a combination of tax incentives, grants, and/or regulations to providers of the service. We encourage local competition for retail access to telecommunication services.

23. We support legislation in Texas to stop Agenda 21.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

General Law Enforcement 182

1. We support the expansion of the Texas Rangers organization.

2. Lawlessness and civil disobedience should not be tolerated, and it is deplorable that the Code of Crimi-

5. nal Procedure tends to overprotect the offender and
6. hinder law enforcement. A new code should therefore
7. be adopted which will strengthen law enforcement
8. rather than weaken it.

9. We support establishing additional courts to
10. expedite trials. We oppose the use of cameras in a
11. courtroom during court proceedings.

12. We recommend common sense in proportioning the
13. rights of criminals, defendants and the general public.

14. 1. We support doing away with the defense of so-
15. called "diminished capacity" resulting from intoxica-
16. tion or drug abuse;

17. 2. We oppose defendants being allowed to use
18. "temporary insanity" as a plea in cases where serious
19. crimes are committed;

20. The term "Terroristic Threat" should be redefined
21. in the criminal code to be more closely identified with
22. terrorists' attacks on our nation.

23. State and local laws should be fairly and equally
24. enforced without regard to race, sex, or age.

25. We support enforcement of the flag code.

26. Any search warrant regarding humane treatment
27. of animals must be issued by the local magistrate of
28. the district where the farm or kennel is located.

29. Background and finger print checks conducted by
30. the DPS, FBI, Home Land Security, TSA, and other
31. government entities should be shared among agen-
32. cies for licensing services to reduce duplication.

33. Immigration laws should be enforced in order to
34. eliminate sanctuary cities.

Prison System

183

1. Recent trends in criminal law have been toward
2. increased leniency for the criminal and less protection
3. for law abiding citizens. This trend must be reversed
4. in our judicial and penal system.

5. Living conditions for prison inmates should be no
6. better than our military prison facilities. Abandoned
7. military bases should be considered for housing
8. prisoners. Such facilities were adequate for shelter
9. of our armed forces, and they should be converted at
10. minimal expense to house convicted criminals. The
11. Texas Department of Criminal Justice needs to utilize
12. all available prison space, including private facili-
13. ties. In order to alleviate overcrowding, we suggest
14. the Texas Department of Criminal Justice consider
15. instituting the shift system rotating between work,
16. sleep and relaxation, as our military personnel have
17. done for years in confined conditions. Control of the
18. state prison system should be by proper state authori-
19. ties rather than by federal judiciary. Those in execu-
20. tive and management positions in the state prison
21. system should have criminal justice education and
22. experience. In order to maintain critical personnel
23. in the prison system, all employees who have direct

24. supervision over prisoners should be classified as haz-
25. arduous duty corrections personnel, for the purposes of
26. state mandated percentage pay increases. We favor
27. elimination of the five percent (5%) cushion used to
28. determine overcrowding in the Texas Department
29. of Criminal Justice. Prisoners should have no rights
30. in suggesting how prison facilities are constructed.

31. We oppose weekend furloughs of prisoners from
32. the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and we are
33. opposed to the early release program in our prison
34. system. We recommend no physical contact for State
35. prisoners during visitation.

36. Dogs should be used to screen all prison visitors for
37. drugs. All prison employees should also be randomly
38. screened for drugs when reporting for duty.

39. Texas Department of Criminal Justice should be
40. self-sustaining, using prisoner labor to produce prod-
41. ucts for public sale. To economize the prison system
42. for state and county, the following practices should
43. be considered:

44. 1. All able-bodied inmates should be required to
45. work a minimum of 40 hours per week.

46. 2. Prisons should be put on a self-supporting policy.
47. Any inmates who do not want to work to support their
48. way should not be eligible for parole and would have
49. to serve their full time.

50. 3. Current jail standards should be lowered.

51. 4. Work-release programs should be supported.

52. We support the use of inmate labor by the Texas
53. Department of Criminal Justice and counties for
54. public service and maintenance work. We encourage
55. expansion of these programs.

56. We recommend that the state probation system be
57. reviewed and that all efforts are made to maintain
58. an efficient, fair system of justice.

Punishment 184

1. We support a minimum sentence of life without
2. parole for persons convicted of murder, rape and child
3. molestation. We support Jessica's Law.

4. We support a criminal justice system that will
5. serve as a deterrent to crime.

6. We support strengthening laws so that punish-
7. ment of juveniles is the same as adults for major
8. crimes. Capital punishment should be maintained
9. in Texas.

10. We recommend strengthening the statutes con-
11. cerning trespass and vandalism and an increase of
12. penalties for these offenses.

13. We support legislation establishing a mandatory
14. fine and full restitution for property damaged by indi-
15. viduals found guilty of trespassing and/or vandalism.

16. We support legislation to remove liability on the
17. part of the landowner for injury and damages to
18. trespassers and vandals.

19. We support legislation that holds authorities
20. or agencies responsible for collecting and paying
21. full damage restitution to private property owners
22. when damage to private property is a direct result of
23. pursuing criminals onto private property. We favor
24. financial restitution to victims by criminals. Anyone
25. convicted of a felony should automatically be liable for
26. damages to the injured party. Any vehicle damaging
27. private property (fences) will have a hold on it until
28. damages are paid to property owner or their agent.

29. We urge that state criminal record laws should be
30. changed to allow public access to adult and juvenile
31. criminal histories, and to include prison disciplinary
32. records and transfers.

33. To ensure the effectiveness of imprisonment as
34. a deterrent to crime, convicted felons should be
35. required to serve a major portion of their sentence
36. before being considered for parole. All first offend-
37. ers should be required to serve a minimum of 50%
38. of their sentence and all repeat offenders should be
39. required to serve 100% of their sentence. We support
40. a "Truth in Sentencing Law" requiring that jurors be
41. provided information, prior to sentencing, related to
42. actual time to be served and parole options. We sup-
43. port harsh punishment and no parole for any inmate
44. caught in possession of illegal contraband.

45. Bail should be denied to any individual previously
46. convicted of a felony or to any individual out on bail
47. who is again arrested for a felony offense.

48. We suggest when judicial authorities see fit to
49. probate a convicted criminal's sentence to community
50. service, they consider physical work. Performing such
51. services might be especially helpful to young, first-
52. time offenders. If fines are not paid, justice of the
53. peace, county and district judges should be allowed
54. to assess labor on public work projects.

55. We support stricter enforcement and stronger
56. punishment for child and senior citizen abuse. We
57. believe that, in child abuse cases, a victim's testimony
58. on video should be allowed for evidence. We sup-
59. port stiffer penalties against domestic violence and
60. encourage prosecutors to prosecute these crimes as
61. felony criminal assaults.

62. We support legislation ensuring all persons
63. convicted of soliciting sex from minors (under 14)
64. receive a minimum of 20 years to life in prison. Out
65. of state/nation persons convicted should receive the
66. same punishment.

67. We oppose the rules that protect "right to privacy"
68. for convicted felons.

69. We support stiffer penalties for persons charged
70. with theft of anhydrous ammonia for the purpose of
71. manufacturing methamphetamines.
72.

1. Despite a tremendous effort at all levels to combat
2. drug problems, the misuse of alcohol, narcotics, and
3. dangerous drugs has reached alarming proportions.
4. The problem is a serious one in all levels of our
5. schools and is a major threat to health and a stimulus
6. to crime. The State of Texas should actively search for
7. credible drug abuse programs and see that they are
8. presented to school age children, and the programs
9. and material made available to community leaders.
10. Vigorous effort must be expended to educate youth
11. and parents in the hazards of drug abuse and gang
12. activities.

13. We support an all-out effort by county and city
14. police departments and school administrators to
15. strictly enforce laws pertaining to the use, sale, and
16. possession of illegal drugs.

17. We support stringent penalties for individuals
18. convicted of drug crimes, including crimes committed
19. to obtain ingredients for manufacturing controlled
20. substances.

21. We recommend consistent enforcement of the new
22. law concerning stiffer and more productive penalties
23. for drunken drivers, drug violators, and habitual
24. offenders.

25. Marijuana should not be legalized. We favor con-
26. tinued use of appropriate defoliant to control illegal
27. growing of marijuana.

28. We support capital punishment for convicted drug
29. kingpins. Any person or persons convicted of selling
30. and/or distributing a controlled substance should
31. receive a mandatory jail sentence. We recommend
32. that drug dealers reimburse the state for the cost
33. of their arrest and conviction before their parole is
34. completed. We recommend that purchase money used
35. in the purchase of illegal drugs be returned to the
36. undercover agency. The return should be made upon
37. final conviction. We favor increased funding for law
38. enforcement agencies in border areas that are the
39. most involved in drug interdiction. We recommend
40. the correction and clarification of both State and
41. Federal drug policy to allow confiscation of land used
42. in illegal drug operations only if the property was
43. purchased with proceeds from illegal drug operations.

44. We support the firing of any state government
45. employee who is proven to be an active drug addict.

46. We support keeping the legal drinking age at 21
47. years of age. We support the continuation of a ban
48. on open containers of alcoholic beverages in motor
49. vehicles.

50. We support the termination of any state govern-
51. ment employee who is found guilty of drug or sub-
52. stance abuse.

53. We support legislation declaring K2 an illegal
54. substance and banning its sale.

Juveniles

186

1. Parents must assume responsibility for the ac-
2. tions and well-being of their children who are under
3. 18 years of age. We also urge that juvenile acts of
4. vandalism be settled by restitution to the victim,
5. with repayment being made by the juveniles, and
6. final financial responsibility charged to the parents.
7. Parents should not be financially responsible for
8. debts incurred or damage caused by juveniles who
9. successfully petition a judge to have their status as
10. a minor removed. Stricter discipline should also be
11. practiced in all state schools of juvenile correction.
12. The State should be financially responsible for dam-
13. age caused by those who run away.

Motor Vehicles

187

1. The fines and fees from all traffic citations issued
2. on State or Federal highways should be retained by
3. the municipality collecting the fines and fees. Indi-
4. vidual law enforcement agencies should not, however,
5. be funded on the basis of fines assessed.
6. Registration of new vehicles should be for a full
7. 12 months from month of purchase. We favor legisla-
8. tion that would not require registration of vehicles
9. on title transfer. Re-registration of vehicles should
10. be allowed at any time without penalty. We favor a
11. common registration date for all vehicles owned by
12. one person if they so request.
13. Emergency lights should be mounted as high as
14. possible on emergency and law enforcement vehicles.
15. We support the use of video cameras in all law en-
16. forcement vehicles.
17. We support legislation that prohibits vehicles from
18. being removed from property that has been damaged
19. by that vehicle until the property owner or his agent
20. has been notified. Damaged property should include,
21. but not be limited to, fences, structures, buildings,
22. trees, landscape, etc. In the event of this type of acci-
23. dent, we support legislation requiring a public official
24. to stay at the scene until the landowner or his agent
25. arrives to secure the property. A penalty should be as-
26. sessed against anyone attempting to tamper with or
27. remove anything from the scene without permission
28. from the public official at the scene of the accident.
29. Formal driver's training should be required for all
30. first time driver license applicants.
31. We support the suspension of driver's license of
32. persons who are convicted of criminal mischief and
33. stiffer penalties for any person driving with either
34. a suspended license or with an expired license. The
35. Texas Department of Public Safety should invoke
36. a processing period in order to verify through the
37. Social Security Administration the validity of social
38. security numbers submitted by new driver's license
39. applicants.

40. All motor vehicles, except vehicles with agricul-
41. tural seasonal registration, must have current license
42. plates and current liability insurance, including
43. vehicles from other countries or states. If license
44. plate or insurance is expired, the vehicle should
45. be impounded until proper plate and insurance is
46. furnished.

47. We support the state not requiring cab cards for
48. farm trucks.

49. Farm vehicle or farm trailer registration should
50. be issued only to those with a Texas Agriculture or
51. Timber Exemption Registration number.

52. We encourage all cities to program traffic lights
53. to keep traffic flowing at a safe speed, while at the
54. same time saving fuel.

55. We support a law making texting while driving
56. illegal.

57. We oppose issuing a driver's license to undocu-
58. mented illegal immigrants.

Property 188

1. We support strong penalties and fines for theft of
2. agricultural commodities and property such as tim-
3. ber, livestock, feed, grain, fertilizer, farm equipment,
4. etc. We urge appointment of special Texas Rangers
5. to investigate agricultural thefts.

6. We support landowners and their agents being
7. exempt from liability resulting from unknown dam-
8. ages to personal property as a result of actions of
9. other people.

10. Vandalism of highway signs and mailboxes should
11. be a third degree felony rather than a misdemeanor.
12. Aggravated arson should be classified as a capital
13. crime.

14. We urge stronger state laws to make it easier to
15. convict those who dump domesticated animals or
16. trash on county roads and private property. Cur-
17. rent laws and regulations governing the burning
18. of stubble, rangeland, or agricultural refuse should
19. be amended to include an extra penalty for anyone
20. burning this refuse and not maintaining a watch
21. and physical presence at the site to prevent damage
22. to property.

23. We urge law enforcement agencies making un-
24. necessary searches of private residences be account-
25. able and forced to pay for destruction of individuals
26. personal property.

27. We support the right of an individual to protect
28. his livestock, including destroying domestic animals
29. on his property which are attacking or have attacked
30. his livestock.

31. Laws should be enacted to protect victims of theft
32. from being deprived of the use of their property when
33. it is used as evidence in court proceedings. Presenta-
34. tion of evidence could be in the form of photographs,

35. slides, movies, or other suitable means. Receivers
36. such as pawn shops, salvage facilities, etc., which deal
37. in resale of used merchandise should be required to
38. compile and keep adequate identification records on
39. merchandise and persons offering it. This information
40. should be made available to law enforcement officers
41. for investigation, and noncompliance by the merchant
42. should be punishable as a Class A misdemeanor with
43. maximum allowable fines. We support developing the
44. necessary cooperation between Texas and Mexico law
45. enforcement agencies to facilitate the identification
46. and return of stolen equipment, machinery, livestock,
47. produce and any other personal property. A list of
48. serial numbers of stolen farm equipment should be
49. compiled and circulated to all equipment sales and
50. service centers.

51. We support the implementation and enforcement
52. of a lemon law for new farm equipment.

53. We support legislation prohibiting unsolicited
54. offers to purchase property by letter, with check
55. attached.

56. Property seized by administrative agencies should
57. be returned to owner with legal fees and damages
58. unless a final conviction for the alleged offense is
59. obtained.

60. We encourage producers to educate themselves
61. about the best methods to protect against a per-
62. son who photographs or records private property,
63. animals, and/or crops with the intent to produce
64. photographs, audio or video recordings to make false
65. statements or misrepresentations about agricultural
66. operations as a whole to the general public.

Weapons

189

1. We support the right of the individual to keep and
2. bear arms. We support amending the Texas Penal
3. Code, to define "traveling," to allow law abiding citi-
4. zens to carry a firearm for defensive purposes while
5. traveling. We support the current "Concealed Hand-
6. gun Law." We recommend that the fees be reduced
7. and the renewal process be shortened/streamlined
8. to eliminate redundant information already on file.

9. We support legislation at state and national levels
10. to impose increased penalties for persons convicted of
11. committing crimes with firearms. We oppose the sale
12. of firearms to persons who are mentally incompetent
13. or convicted felons.

14. We support the enactment of legislation that
15. would stipulate that any resident of the State of
16. Texas could use deadly force if they believe their life
17. or another life is in danger.

18. Crimes involving the use of firearms present seri-
19. ous threats to property and human life. We support
20. a mandatory jail sentence of not less than ten years
21. for conviction for armed robbery. If death results, a

22. convicted person should receive a mandatory sen-
23. tence of death or life without parole.
24. We recommend that theft of firearms be made a
25. felony offense regardless of the value of the stolen
26. firearms.
27. We are opposed to any legislation restricting the
28. purchase, possession or sale of firearms and ammuni-
29. tion by United States citizens. We are opposed to the
30. registration of firearms or the licensing and taxing
31. of the owners.

INSURANCE

Insurance Generally 190

1. We recommend that the Texas Department of
2. Insurance consider for Public Protection Class (PPC)
3. all fire departments which are supported by any local
4. government in Texas even though the fire department
5. may be based across the state line. Volunteer Fire
6. Departments' Insurance Services Offices (ISO) 5
7. mile distance limit should be extended to 10 miles, if
8. feasible. We support the "dry hydrant concept." State
9. and local governments should support programs to
10. enhance fire suppression based on this concept.
11. We recommend that the Texas Department of
12. Insurance require insurance companies to appraise
13. crop loss claims as quickly as possible.
14. A mortgagee or trustee should not be able to ex-
15. ercise an option to use insurance proceeds on a stan-
16. dard fire and extended coverage policy to reduce the
17. indebtedness of the insured's loan if it is economically
18. feasible to rebuild or restore the damaged property,
19. provided the insured's loan payments are current.
20. We support a limitation on liability judgments
21. to the cost of actual damages and a maximum of
22. \$250,000 in punitive damages on pain and suffer-
23. ing. Legal fees should be limited to 15 percent of the
24. settlement with the attorneys paying a pro-rata share
25. of all court costs. Juries should not be made aware
26. whether or not one has insurance.
27. We support legislation setting limits of liability on
28. volunteer fire departments. These limits will reduce
29. insurance premiums for volunteer fire departments.
30. We support tort reform, including a limitation on
31. attorney fees and a cap on awards. We support leg-
32. islation requiring the losing party in a civil lawsuit
33. to pay all legal expenses and court costs.
34. We support legislation prohibiting a person con-
35. victed of criminal activity from suing his/her victim.
36. Liability for any defendant in a lawsuit should be
37. limited to that percentage his negligence contributed
38. to the accident and/or injury that exceeds the negli-
39. gence of the plaintiff.
40. We support legislation to ensure there will be a
41. viable insurance program available before and after

- 42. disasters. We encourage legislation to strengthen
- 43. the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA)
- 44. law to assure future financial solvency.

Auto Insurance 191

- 1. Drivers under 25 who have satisfactorily completed a driver's education course and have good
- 2. driving records should not be penalized by higher
- 3. insurance rates.
- 4. Uninsured motorists should not be able to collect
- 5. medical benefits, auto repairs or any other compensation for an accident involving an insured person,
- 6. regardless of who is at fault. Uninsured motorists
- 7. should lose all rights to sue another regardless of
- 8. who is at fault in an auto accident. We support seizure of the auto of an uninsured motorist who is
- 9. involved in an accident resulting in damages, regardless of who is at fault. The third offense shall result in
- 10. seizures of the auto and revocation of driver's license for 90 days. The auto should be sold to reimburse the
- 11. insured motorist for damages. We support tracking of, and stiff penalties for, insurers and buyers who
- 12. sell or purchase insurance on monthly installments solely for the purpose of license renewal or other
- 13. documents that require proof of insurance, and then cancel or stop premium payments.
- 14. All government owned or government controlled
- 15. vehicles or other machinery should be covered by casualty and liability insurance if such vehicles and
- 16. equipment are operated by civilians.
- 17. The State should require that all vehicles with
- 18. foreign license plates have the states minimum liability insurance upon entry into the State of Texas.
- 19. We oppose the lowering of insurance rates for
- 20. Mexican nationals needing liability insurance on U.S. highways.
- 21. We recommend that the State of Texas adopt no-fault auto insurance.
- 22. We oppose increasing insurance rates on larger
- 23. type vehicles.
- 24.
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- 35.

Health Insurance 192

- 1. We recommend changes in the insurance code
- 2. to prohibit companies selling accident and sickness policies from adding exclusions after policies have
- 3. been in effect for one year.
- 4. We recommend that the Texas Department of
- 5. Insurance require health insurance companies operating in the State of Texas to pay insurance claims
- 6. within 30 days of receipt. If not paid in 60 days, 20 percent interest shall be added to the amount due
- 7. to the customer.
- 8. We support legislation requiring all group hospital insurance policies to pay total stated benefits
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

13. to policy owner regardless of other policies owned.
14. For the purpose of rating workers' compensation
15. insurance, we favor payroll classification separating
16. office, clerical and marketing personnel from other
17. employees with greater risk exposure.
18. A state agency should monitor and discourage
19. abuses of medical health claims.
20. We oppose requiring businesses to provide health
21. care insurance for employees.
22. We recommend that the Texas Health Insurance
23. Risk Pool be funded.
24. We support establishment of a group health insur-
25. ance program for all active and retired school employ-
26. ees comparable to the health insurance programs for
27. higher education and state employees.
28. Health insurance companies should be required to
29. use a pool common to all companies for the purpose
30. of calculating insurance premiums for various age
31. brackets.

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