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Every Friday, this newsletter will keep you up to speed on some of the legislation important to Texas Farm Bureau members that Austin staff are following.

Please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate staff with any questions.

Winter Storm Update

Our thoughts and prayers are with each of you, your families and your operations as we endure this remarkably unfortunate weather situation in Texas. The TFB team has been in consistent communication with Gov. Greg Abbott's office, sharing situational updates and highlighting critical needs for agriculture.

Due to the imminent threat associated with the winter storm, Abbott issued a [disaster declaration](#) and prioritized looking into ERCOT and the situation by declaring the extensive review of ERCOT an emergency item this session. As a result, House Speaker Dade Phelan requested a joint session of the House State Affairs and Energy Resources committees, and a [public hearing](#) has been set for Thursday, Feb. 25, at 9 a.m. You can access a livestream of the joint session [here](#).

There will also be a public [hearing](#) before the Senate Business & Commerce Committee on Thursday, Feb. 25, at 9 a.m. You can access the live video broadcast of the Senate [here](#).

The Texas Division of Emergency Management has activated warming shelters across Texas. To find one near you, visit <https://tdem.texas.gov/warm/>.

Recovery resources are available through USDA's [disaster assistance for agricultural operations](#) for eligible operations impacted by weather events such as this. For more information on USDA disaster assistance programs, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

As we continue to deal with the consequences of this catastrophic event, we encourage you to share your stories and keep persevering—a task we know full well you are so very good at.

Legislative Update

Invasive Species

[SB 634](#): Relating to the confidentiality of the identity of certain landowners who participate in a State Soil and Water Conservation Board program to manage or eradicate an invasive species.

[Sen. Kolkhorst, Lois \(R\)](#)

This bill would require full confidentiality for landowners who decide to participate in invasive species eradication programs. The bill specifies that information written, produced, collected, assembled or maintained by the state board that would identify a landowner who participates in a state board program to manage or eradicate an invasive species is confidential.

The bill has an exception for information that would identify a person who receives state money under a contract with the state board to manage or eradicate an invasive species. Individuals who accept public money are typically subject to open records to ensure transparency and accountability.

TFB supports SB 634. (TFB 2021 Policy: Rural Living 183, Page 116, Lines 19-27. Weed Control 138, Page 32, Lines 27-28. Animal Species Generally 148, Page 56, Lines 55-57. Groundwater 153, Page 70, Lines 190-194. Water Management 155, Page 77, Lines 77-82).

Seed Law

[HB 1266](#) and [SB 677](#): Relating to the administration of seed and plant certification in this state by the State Seed and Plant Certification Council and the Texas Crop Improvement Association.

[Rep. Kacal, Kyle \(R\)](#)

[Sen. Springer, Drew \(R\)](#)

This legislation—filed last session as HB 2166—replaces the State Seed and Plant Board administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture with the Texas Crop Improvement Association as the state's official seed certification agency. The bill requires the Texas Crop Improvement Association to comply with standards and procedures established by the State Seed and Plant Certification Council in accordance with the Federal Seed Act to assure the genetic purity and identity of the seed and plants certified. The association shall carry out this work on a financially self-supporting basis. Seed certification is a voluntary marketing program to add value to certain seed sold domestically and required by some countries where seed is shipped. All state programs are overseen and audited by the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies on behalf of USDA.

TFB supports HB 1266 and SB 677. (TFB 2021 Policy: Seed Law 137, lines 35-40).

Austin Legislative Staff on Texas News and Views

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