



AUSTIN NEWSLETTER

Texas Farm Bureau's Weekly Newsletter for the 88th Legislature

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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.

Update on Previously Reported Bills

Right to Farm

[HB 1750](#) Relating to the applicability of certain city requirements to agricultural operations.

[Burns, DeWayne \(R\)](#), SP: [Perry, Charles \(R\)](#)

Update:

The final piece of right to farm legislation was passed by the Senate on Monday, May 15, 2023. HB 1750 was passed by the Senate with a 31-0 vote. HB 1750 has now passed both the House of Representatives and Senate and will be sent to the governor.

The right to farm was the top priority issue for Texas Farm Bureau this session. After HJR 126 and HB 2308 passed both chambers of the Legislature, Texas Farm Bureau was anticipating the passage of HB 1750.

TFB **supports** HB 1750. (TFB 2023 Policy: Real Property Rights Section 150, Page 58, Lines 2-5; Real Property Rights Section 150, Page 59, Lines 27-31; Real Property Rights Section 150, Page 61, Lines 153-154)

Rural Connectivity

[HB 9](#) and **[HJR 125](#)**: Relating to the development and funding of broadband and telecommunications services.

[Ashby, Trent \(R\)](#), SP: [Huffman, Joan \(R\)](#)

Summary:

HB 9 sets up a new funding mechanism for the Texas Broadband Infrastructure Fund. The bill would create the Texas Broadband Infrastructure Fund to provide \$5 billion in state funding to ensure expansion of broadband throughout rural Texas.

The legislation would also fully fund the Universal Service Fund, which ensures connectivity throughout rural Texas. The creation of this fund and dedication of the funding would have to be approved by constitutional amendment HJR 125 by Rep. Ashby.

Update:

HB 9 was voted favorably from the Senate Committee on Finance with a 16-1 vote. Next step is a vote in the Senate.

TFB **supports** HB 9 and HJR 125. (TFB 2023 Policy: Utilities Section 148, Page 53, Lines 50-53, Rural Living 183, Page 119, Lines 46-53)

[SB 1710](#): Relating to the universal service fund.

[Perry, Charles \(R\)](#); SP: [Burrows, Dustin \(R\)](#)

Summary:

SB 1710 will ensure that support for connectivity throughout rural Texas is continued. The bill also will ensure that support distributed from the Texas Universal Service Fund will be used for areas of the state that demonstrate a need for continued support.

Update:

SB 1710 has been passed by the Senate with a 30-1 vote. Since then, it was reported favorably from the House Committee on State Affairs by a 13-0 vote and is now set on the House Local and Consent Calendar.

TFB **supports** SB 1710. (TFB Policy: Utilities Section 148, Page 53, Lines 50-53, Rural Living 183, Page 119, Lines 46-53)

Water

[HB 1971](#): Relating to the procedures for acting on a permit or permit amendment application by a groundwater conservation district and the disqualification of board members of groundwater conservation districts.

[Ashby, Trent \(R\)](#); SP: [Springer, Drew \(R\)](#)

Summary:

HB 1971 was summarized in [a previous edition of the Austin Newsletter](#). The bill was amended to remove the provisions penalizing GCD board members that break quorum.

Update:

HB 1971 was passed by the Senate with a 31-0 vote. It will now be sent to the governor.

TFB **supports** HB 1971. (TFB 2023 Policy: Groundwater 153 page 70, lines 45-48; page 71, lines 140-145.)

SB 28: Relating to financial assistance provided and programs administered by the Texas Water Development Board.

[Ashby, Trent \(R\)](#)

Summary:

SB 28 creates the new water supply for Texas fund. The state treasury would set aside a special fund to "finance projects...that will lead to the acquisition or creation of seven million acre-feet of new water supplies by Dec. 31, 2033." Political subdivisions and wholesale water providers who are implementing these projects may be eligible for low interest loans.

Update:

SB 28 passed the House of Representatives with a 136-8 vote. SB 28 was passed in both chambers and will now be sent to the governor.

SJR 75: Proposing a constitutional amendment creating the Texas water fund to assist in financing water projects in this state.

[Perry, Charles \(R\)](#); SP: [King, Tracy \(D\)](#)

Update:

SJR 75 was passed by the House of Representatives with a 135-4 vote.

TFB **supports** SB 28 and SJR 75. (TFB Policy: Water Management Section 155, Page 79, Lines 46-48; Water Management Section 155, Page 80, Lines 136-138)

HB 2271: Relating to the protection of aquaculture operations.

[Kacal, Kyle \(R\)](#); SP: [Kolkhorst, Lois \(R\)](#)

Summary:

HB 2271 was summarized in [a previous edition of the Austin Newsletter](#).

Update:

HB 2271 was passed by the Senate with a 31-0 vote. HB 2271 will now be sent to the governor.

TFB **supports** HB 2271. (TFB 2023 Policy: Aquaculture Section 110, page 8, lines 1-4)

HB 2443: Relating to the authority of certain persons to petition a groundwater conservation district to change certain rules.

[Harris, Cody \(R\)](#); SP: [Perry, Charles \(R\)](#)

Summary:

According to HB 2443, anyone with "groundwater ownership and rights" can petition their water district to amend the restrictions.

The petitioners must justify why the sought regulation change is required and in line with best practices for water conservation. Each person whose ownership or rights to groundwater will be affected by the proposed modifications must receive written notice from the petitioner.

Update:

The bill was voted out of the Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee with an 8-0 vote. HB 2443 will now head to the Senate floor.

TFB **supports** HB 2443. (TFB 2023 Policy: Real Property Rights Section 150, Page 58, Lines 2-5; Groundwater Section 153, Page 70, Lines 57-59)

Transportation

SB 505: Relating to imposing an additional fee for the registration of an electric vehicle.

[Nichols, Robert \(R\)](#); [Canales, Terry \(D\)](#)

Summary:

HB 505 was summarized in [a previous edition of the Austin Newsletter](#).

Update:

SB 505 was passed by the House of Representatives with a 145-0 vote. It was also signed by the governor and will be effective Sept. 1, 2023.

TFB **supports** SB 505. (TFB Policy: Other Taxes Section 145, Page 47, Lines 35-37)

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