



AUSTIN NEWSLETTER

Texas Farm Bureau's Weekly Newsletter for the 89th 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.

Texas Farm Bureau Leadership Conference

This week, over 300 county Farm Bureau leaders attended the Leadership Conference in Austin. The conference concluded with county leaders going to the Texas Capitol for meetings with their legislators to advocate for priority issues important to farmers, ranchers, and rural Texans.

Legislators who are Texas Farm Bureau members are recognized by our organization by presenting them with member gate signs. Many legislators will display these signs in their Capitol office.



Rural Affairs

SB 868: Relating to the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program and authorizing an increase in the assessment on certain insurers that fund the program.

[Sparks, Kevin](#)

SB 868 allows the legislature to increase the amount insurers may be assessed to fund the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program. Currently, the Legislature may not appropriate more than \$30 million to the fund. SB 868 removes this restriction.

The bill specifically targets funding for areas that are high risk for large wildfires. The bill would allocate additional funding and support for volunteer fire departments across the state.

At least 10% of the appropriations for a state fiscal year from the fund will be designated for high-risk wildfire areas. If the assistance requests from eligible volunteer fire departments in these areas are less than the allocated amount, the unused funds may be redirected to other assistance needs outlined in the subchapter.

TFB supports SB 868.

TFB 2025 Policy: Forestry Section 115, Page 12, Lines 14-16; Rural Living Section 184, Page 125, Lines 29-33)

SB 767: Relating to creating a database of the firefighting equipment in the state available for use in responding to wildfires.

[Sparks, Kevin](#)

Summary:

SB 767 creates a database of the state's firefighting equipment that is available for use in response to wildfires.

By creating this centralized resource, the bill seeks to enhance coordination and efficiency in the state's firefighting efforts, ultimately improving response times and effectiveness during wildfire emergencies.

TFB supports SB 767.

TFB 2025 Policy: Rural Living Section 184, Page 125, Lines 31-39

HB 3334: Relating to wildfire prevention, mitigation, and response at certain wells under the jurisdiction of the Railroad Commission of Texas.

King, Ken

Summary:

HB 3334 establishes a framework for wildfire prevention, mitigation, and response at wells under the jurisdiction of the Railroad Commission of Texas.

This bill creates a structured process for ensuring that oil and gas facilities are evaluated for fire risks through mandatory inspections. Operators must contract with bonded, state-certified, third-party inspectors to conduct annual assessments of active wells and associated facilities, requiring detailed written reports within specified timelines after inspection.

If deficiencies are identified, operators must confer with the commission and implement necessary remedial actions within 30 days.

The bill allows the commission to manage orphaned wells by assuming control if owners are unresponsive, enhancing public safety through enforced compliance with wildfire regulations.

It also outlines the liability protections for surface owners concerning their property in the event of operator non-responsiveness or emergencies related to wildfires.

TFB supports HB 3334.

TFB 2025 Policy: Rural Living Section 184, Page 125, Lines 39-42; Water Disposal Section 158, Page 92, Lines 186-192; Water Disposal Section, Page 92, Lines 196-202.

Update on Previously Reported Bills

SB 503 & HB 1417: Relating to the establishment of an electronic registry of livestock marks and brands.

Perry, Charles & Guillen, Ryan

SB 503 and HB 1417 were summarized in [a previous edition of the Austin Newsletter](#).

Update:

SB 503 was heard on Monday, Feb. 24, in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs. Texas Farm Bureau registered in support of the bill.

Following normal committee procedure, the bill was left pending with future action to be taken at a later committee meeting.

2025 AFBF Award Winners Recognized by the House of Representatives

HR 278: Congratulating Kade and Morgan Hodges on receiving the American Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmer & Rancher Achievement Award.

[Darby, Drew](#)

Texas Farm Bureau members Kade and Morgan Hodges were recognized this week on the House floor for winning the American Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmer & Rancher Achievement Award.

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