



AUSTIN NEWSLETTER

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

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The *Austin Newsletter* is being distributed early this week. The Texas Farm Bureau offices in Waco and Austin are closed on Friday, April 18, in observance of Good Friday. Please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate staff with any questions.

Energy

HB 4572: Relating to the regulation by the Texas Railroad Commission of certain pits used for the storage and disposal of oil and gas waste.

[Morales Shaw, Penny](#)

Summary:

HB 4572 would allow the Texas Railroad Commission to have greater regulatory oversight of pits used for storing and disposal of oil and gas waste. The legislation would establish safety standards and financial requirements for operators using reserve pits for the permanent disposal of oil and gas waste. Operators would be required to provide the county clerk with a pit's location and waste details within 30 days of closing a pit used for permanent waste disposal.

The bill also promotes greater communication and transparency by requiring operators to inform landowners prior to the burial of waste. HB 4572 protects the public health and the environment from various risks associated with oil and gas waste disposal pits.

Current Status:

HB 4572 was heard in the House Committee on Energy Resources. Texas Farm Bureau registered in support of the bill. Shelby County Farm Bureau President Terry Allen testified as himself on the need for legislation that will improve groundwater protection in the areas where oil and gas operations take place. Following normal committee procedure, the bill was left pending in committee.

TFB supports HB 4572.

TFB 2025 Policy: Minerals Section 153, Page 73, Lines 175-178.

Update on Previously Reported Bills

SB 532: Relating to grant amounts under the Young Farmer Grant program.
[Sparks, Kevin](#)

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

Update:

SB 532 passed the Senate with a 30-0 vote. The bill now goes to the House to be considered for a committee hearing.

TFB supports SB 532.

TFB 2025 Policy: Banking and Credit Section 174, Page 116, Lines 30-35.

SB 1245: Relating to the taking of certain aoudad sheep by using a helicopter.
[Blanco, Cesar](#)

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

Update:

SB 1245 passed the Senate with a 30-0 vote. The bill now goes to the House to be considered for a committee hearing.

TFB supports SB 1245.

TFB 2025 Policy: Animal Species Generally Section 121, Page 19, Lines 1-6, Page 20, Lines 61-64.

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](#)

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

Update:

SB 868 passed the Senate with a 30-0 vote. The bill now goes to the House to be considered for a committee hearing.

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 503: Relating to the establishment of an electronic registry of livestock marks and brands.

[Perry, Charles](#)

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

Update:

SB 503 passed the Texas House of Representatives with a 132-13 vote. SB 503 has now passed both the House of Representatives and Senate and will be sent to Governor Greg Abbott.

TFB supports SB 503.

TFB 2025 Policy: Livestock Section 120, Page 18, Lines 133-167.

SB 819: Relating to renewable energy generation facilities.

[Kolkhorst, Lois](#)

The filed version of this bill was summarized in a previous edition of the [Austin Newsletter](#).

Update:

SB 819 passed the Senate with a 22-9 vote. The bill now goes to the House to be considered for a committee hearing.

The bill was passed out of the Senate with changes from the filed version of the bill.

The bill now requires a determination to be made by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) instead of a permit process. Wind and solar developers must submit an application for a public interest determination with the PUC. This application must include detailed information about the facility, such as its location, type, compliance with agreements, and public notice. It must also document support or opposition from local governing bodies and demonstrate that the facility will not negatively impact national security. The PUC would have 180 days to review the application, with possible extensions, and may deny it if the potential harm outweighs the benefits or if the application does not meet the required criteria.

The PUC would be responsible for regulating and supervising applicants, ensuring compliance with the rules, and enforcing penalties if necessary. This includes adopting and enforcing rules to protect the competitive process and maintain confidentiality of sensitive information. The PUC's decisions on applications must be posted on its website, providing transparency in the approval process.

A site plan for a solar facility must ensure equipment is at least 100 feet from any property line and 200 feet from any habitable structure. For wind facilities, equipment must be at least twice the height of the turbine, including the blade, from the property line. The PUC may require greater distances for approval.

Wind and solar developers must also notify the county judge of each county within 25 miles of the facility's boundary and publish a notice in a local newspaper for two consecutive issues. The notice must describe the type and location of the proposed facility.

TFB supports SB 819.

TFB 2025 Policy: Renewable Energy Section 147, Page 55, Lines 40-46

HB 43: Relating to the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority and certain programs administered by the authority.

[Kitzman, Stan](#)

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

Update:

HB 43 was voted out of the House Committee on Agriculture & Livestock with a 7-0 vote. It will now wait to be heard on the House floor.

TFB supports HB 43.

TFB 2025 Policy: Banking and Credit Section 174, Page 116, Lines 30-35.

SB 994 & SJR 46: Relating to an exemption from ad valorem taxation of tangible personal property consisting of animal feed held by the owner of the property for sale at retail.

[Nichols, Robert](#)

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

Update:

SB 994 and SJR 46 was heard in Senate Committee on Local Government on April 14. Anderson County Farm Bureau board members Ted Britton and Jimmy Reed both testified for themselves on how this legislation would personally affect their operations. Following normal committee procedure, the bill was left pending in committee.

TFB supports SB 994 and SJR 46.

TFB 2025 Policy: Other Taxes Section 145, Page 52, Lines 120-121.

HB 2018: Relating to the Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program.
[Ashby, Trent](#)

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

Update:

HB 2018 was voted out of the House Committee on Culture, Recreation and Tourism with an 8-0 vote and is now set on the House Local and Consent Calendar.

TFB supports HB 2018.

TFB 2025 Policy: Real Property Section 151, Page 63, Lines 16-20.

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