

By: Clardy

H.B. No. 1555

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to the Upper Guadalupe River Authority, following the  
3 recommendations of the Sunset Advisory Commission; altering terms  
4 of the board of directors; specifying grounds for the removal of a  
5 member of the board of directors.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

7 SECTION 1. Section 1A(a), Chapter 5, page 1062, Special  
8 Laws, Acts of the 46th Legislature, Regular Session, 1939, is  
9 amended to read as follows:

10 Sec. 1A. (a) The District is subject to review under  
11 Chapter 325, Government Code (Texas Sunset Act), but may not be  
12 abolished under that chapter. The review shall be conducted under  
13 Section 325.025, Government Code, as if the District were a state  
14 agency scheduled to be abolished September 1, 2035 [~~2023~~], and  
15 every 12th year after that year.

16 SECTION 2. Section 8, Chapter 5, page 1062, Special Laws,  
17 Acts of the 46th Legislature, Regular Session, 1939, is amended to  
18 read as follows:

19 Section 8. The [~~It shall not be necessary for the Board of~~  
20 ~~Directors to call or hold a hearing on the adoption of a plan of~~  
21 ~~taxation, but the~~] ad valorem plan of taxation shall be used by the  
22 District.

23 SECTION 3. Section 9, Chapter 5, page 1062, Special Laws,  
24 Acts of the 46th Legislature, Regular Session, 1939, is amended by

1 amending Subsections (b), (c), and (d) and adding Subsection (f) to  
2 read as follows:

3 (b) Directors are appointed by the Governor. The Governor  
4 shall designate a Director as the president of the Board to serve in  
5 that capacity at the pleasure of the Governor. Directors are  
6 appointed for staggered terms of four [~~six (6)~~] years with either  
7 four or five [~~three~~] Directors' terms expiring on February 1 of each  
8 odd-numbered year. The Governor shall fill a vacancy on the Board  
9 by appointment for the unexpired term.

10 (c) The Board of Directors shall elect from its number a  
11 [~~president, a~~] vice president and a secretary of the Board of  
12 Directors and of the District, and such other officers as in the  
13 judgment of the Board are necessary. The president, as designated  
14 by the Governor, shall be chief executive officer of the District  
15 and the presiding officer of the Board, and shall have the same  
16 right to vote as any other Director. The vice president shall  
17 perform all duties and exercise all power conferred by this Act or  
18 the general law upon the president when the president is absent or  
19 fails or declines to act. The secretary shall keep and sign the  
20 minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors; and in the  
21 secretary's [~~his~~] absence at any board meeting, a secretary pro tem  
22 shall be named for that meeting who may exercise all the duties and  
23 powers of the secretary for such meeting, sign the minutes thereof,  
24 and attest all orders passed or other action taken at such meeting.  
25 The secretary shall be the custodian of all minutes and records of  
26 the District.

27 (d) The Board shall appoint a general manager of the

1 District and all necessary engineers, attorneys, auditors, and  
2 other employees.

3 (f) The Board shall develop and implement policies that  
4 clearly separate the policy-making responsibilities of the Board  
5 and the management responsibilities of the general manager and the  
6 staff of the District.

7 SECTION 4. Chapter 5, page 1062, Special Laws, Acts of the  
8 46th Legislature, Regular Session, 1939, is amended by adding  
9 Sections 9A, 9B, 9C, and 9D to read as follows:

10 Sec. 9A. (a) It is a ground for removal from the Board that  
11 a Director:

12 (1) does not have at the time of taking office the  
13 qualifications required by Section 9(a) of this Act;

14 (2) does not maintain during service on the Board the  
15 qualifications required by Section 9(a) of this Act;

16 (3) is ineligible for directorship under Chapter 171,  
17 Local Government Code;

18 (4) cannot, because of illness or disability,  
19 discharge the Director's duties for a substantial part of the  
20 Director's term; or

21 (5) is absent from more than half of the regularly  
22 scheduled Board meetings that the Director is eligible to attend  
23 during a calendar year without an excuse approved by a majority vote  
24 of the Board.

25 (b) The validity of an action of the Board is not affected by  
26 the fact that it is taken when a ground for removal of a Director  
27 exists.

1       (c) If the general manager has knowledge that a potential  
2 ground for removal exists, the general manager shall notify the  
3 President of the Board of the potential ground. The President shall  
4 then notify the Governor and the Attorney General that a potential  
5 ground for removal exists. If the potential ground for removal  
6 involves the President, the general manager shall notify the next  
7 highest ranking Director, who shall then notify the Governor and  
8 the Attorney General that a potential ground for removal exists.

9       Sec. 9B. (a) A person who is appointed to and qualifies for  
10 office as a Director may not vote, deliberate, or be counted as a  
11 Director in attendance at a meeting of the Board until the person  
12 completes a training program that complies with this section.

13       (b) The training program must provide the person with  
14 information regarding:

15               (1) the law governing District operations;

16               (2) the programs, functions, rules, and budget of the  
17 District;

18               (3) the scope of and limitations on the rulemaking  
19 authority of the Board;

20               (4) the results of the most recent formal audit of the  
21 District;

22               (5) the requirements of:

23                       (A) laws relating to open meetings, public  
24 information, administrative procedure, and disclosing conflicts of  
25 interest; and

26                       (B) other laws applicable to members of the  
27 governing body of a river authority in performing their duties; and

1           (6) any applicable ethics policies adopted by the  
2 District or the Texas Ethics Commission.

3           (c) A person appointed to the Board is entitled to  
4 reimbursement for the travel expenses incurred in attending the  
5 training program regardless of whether the attendance at the  
6 program occurs before or after the person qualifies for office.

7           (d) The general manager of the District shall create a  
8 training manual that includes the information required by  
9 Subsection (b) of this section. The general manager shall  
10 distribute a copy of the training manual annually to each Director.  
11 Each Director shall sign and submit to the general manager a  
12 statement acknowledging that the Director received and has reviewed  
13 the training manual.

14           Sec. 9C. (a) The District shall maintain a system to  
15 promptly and efficiently act on complaints filed with the District.  
16 The District shall maintain information about parties to the  
17 complaint, the subject matter of the complaint, a summary of the  
18 results of the review or investigation of the complaint, and its  
19 disposition.

20           (b) The District shall make information available  
21 describing its procedures for complaint investigation and  
22 resolution.

23           (c) The District shall periodically notify the complaint  
24 parties of the status of the complaint until final disposition,  
25 unless the notice would jeopardize an investigation.

26           Sec. 9D. The Board shall develop and implement policies  
27 that provide the public with a reasonable opportunity to appear

1 before the Board and to speak on any issue under the jurisdiction of  
2 the District.

3 SECTION 5. Section 7, Chapter 5, page 1062, Special Laws,  
4 Acts of the 46th Legislature, Regular Session, 1939, is repealed.

5 SECTION 6. At the first meeting of the board of the Upper  
6 Guadalupe River Authority that follows the effective date of this  
7 Act, the six directors of the Upper Guadalupe River Authority whose  
8 terms do not expire on February 1, 2025, shall draw lots to  
9 determine which director will serve a term that expires on February  
10 1, 2025, and which five directors will serve terms that expire on  
11 February 1, 2027. The three directors with terms expiring on  
12 February 1, 2025, will serve terms that expire on that date.

13 SECTION 7. Notwithstanding Section 9B, Chapter 5, page  
14 1062, Special Laws, Acts of the 46th Legislature, Regular Session,  
15 1939, as added by this Act, a person serving on the board of  
16 directors of the Upper Guadalupe River Authority may vote,  
17 deliberate, and be counted as a director in attendance at a meeting  
18 of the board until December 1, 2023.

19 SECTION 8. (a) The legal notice of the intention to  
20 introduce this Act, setting forth the general substance of this  
21 Act, has been published as provided by law, and the notice and a  
22 copy of this Act have been furnished to all persons, agencies,  
23 officials, or entities to which they are required to be furnished  
24 under Section 59, Article XVI, Texas Constitution, and Chapter 313,  
25 Government Code.

26 (b) The governor, one of the required recipients, has  
27 submitted the notice and Act to the Texas Commission on

1 Environmental Quality.

2 (c) The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has filed  
3 its recommendations relating to this Act with the governor, the  
4 lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of  
5 representatives within the required time.

6 (d) All requirements of the constitution and laws of this  
7 state and the rules and procedures of the legislature with respect  
8 to the notice, introduction, and passage of this Act are fulfilled  
9 and accomplished.

10 SECTION 9. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.