

Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., P.E., *Chairman*
Toby Baker, *Commissioner*
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Richard A. Hyde, P.E., *Executive Director*



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

May 4, 2017

The Honorable Joe Straus
Texas House of Representatives
Capitol Station
PO Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910

Re: Responsibility of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Pursuant to Article XVI, Section 59(d), Texas Constitution

House Bill (HB) 4298, as Filed by Representative Tom Oliverson - Relating to the creation of the Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 553; granting a limited power of eminent domain; providing authority to issue bonds; providing authority to impose assessments, fees, and taxes.

Dear Speaker Straus:

The following comments are provided pursuant to the Constitutional requirements referenced above. Under those requirements, the TCEQ must submit, to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House of Representatives, the TCEQ's recommendations on specific legislation affecting water districts. We recommend that these comments be considered in the evaluation of the proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cari-Michel LaCaille".

Cari-Michel LaCaille, Director
Water Supply Division

cc: Honorable Jim Murphy, Chairman, House Special Purpose Districts Committee
Representative Tom Oliverson, Texas House of Representatives

Enclosure

**HB 4298, as Filed by Representative Tom Oliverson
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Comments**

The Legislative Budget Board, in cooperation with the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), has determined that:

This bill amends the Special District Local Laws Code by adding Chapter 7997 which creates the Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 553 (District) with the powers and duties of a standard municipal utility district under Water Code Chapters 49 and 54, with the following exceptions.

Comments on Powers/Duties Different from Similar Types of Districts: This bill grants the District authority for road projects. The District may exercise the powers provided by this section without submitting a petition to or obtaining approval from the TCEQ as required by Section 54.234, Water Code; the District may not undertake a road project unless: each municipality or county that will operate and maintain the road has approved the plans and specifications of the road project, if a municipality or county will operate and maintain the road; or the Texas Transportation Commission has approved the plans and specifications of the road project, if the state will operate and maintain the road. Except as provided by Subsection (a), the district is not required to obtain approval from the Texas Transportation Commission to design, acquire, construct, finance, issue bonds for, improve, or convey a road project; the District may not exercise the power of eminent domain outside the District to acquire a site or easement for: a road project; or a recreational facility as defined by Section 49.462, Water Code; the bill specifies that at the time of issuance, the total principal amount of bonds or other obligations issued or incurred to finance road projects and payable from ad valorem taxes may not exceed one-fourth of the assessed value of real property in the District; and, if the bill does not receive a two-thirds vote of all members elected to each house, the District may not exercise the power of eminent domain.

Overlapping Services: TCEQ does not have mapping information for water and/or wastewater providers because this function was transferred from the TCEQ to the Public Utility Commission on September 1, 2014. As a result, TCEQ is unaware of possible overlapping service providers.

TCEQ's Supervision: As with general law districts, the TCEQ will have general supervisory authority, including bond review authority and review of financial reports.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF TEXAS

HB 4298
Bill Number

TO: The Honorable Governor of Texas
SUBJECT: A Bill Relating to a Conservation and Reclamation District

This is to transmit to you and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality copies of a bill relating to a conservation and reclamation district and copies of the notice of intention to introduce the bill. One copy is for your files and one for you to forward to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, under Section 59(d), Article XVI, Constitution of the State of Texas.

3/29/2017

Date transmitted to
Governor's Office


Chief Clerk
House of Representatives

TO: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
SUBJECT: A Bill Relating to a Conservation and Reclamation District

This is to forward to you a copy of a bill relating to conservation and reclamation district and a copy of the notice of intention to introduce the bill.

April 7, 2017

Date transmitted to
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality


Governor

TO: The Honorable Speaker of the House
The Honorable President of the Senate
The Honorable Governor of Texas
SUBJECT: A Bill Relating to a Conservation and Reclamation District

Attached are recommendations of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in compliance with Section 59(d), Article XVI, Constitution of the State of Texas.


Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

