

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**NOTICE OF FORMAL REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

COMMITTEE: Natural Resources  
TIME & DATE: N/A  
Saturday, August 1, 2020  
PLACE: N/A  
CHAIR: Rep. Lyle Larson

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Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and challenges in scheduling public hearings at this time, the House Committee on Natural Resources is seeking written submissions from interested parties and the public on the interim charges and issues listed below. Submissions received in response to this request will be transmitted to members of the committee and posted on the House website.

**Submission Guidelines:**

- Submissions must be in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF.
- Submissions are requested to be limited to 5 pages in length.
- Please submit a separate document for each topic to which you are responding.
- Submissions must be submitted via e-mail to Committee staff at Shannon.Houston\_HC@house.texas.gov.
- Please include the following information in the submission email: submitter name, organization or entity (if applicable and an authorized representative), mailing address, and telephone number.
- Please include "HNR RFI" and the interim charge number(s) to which you are responding in the subject line of the email.
- **The deadline for all submissions is Friday, September 25th.**

**Topics:**

**Interim Charge 1:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:

- HJR 4, SB 7, and SB 8, which relate to statewide and regional flood planning and mitigation. Monitor the progress of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and other entities to provide for the planning, development, and financing of drainage, flood mitigation, and flood control projects statewide to strengthen the state's infrastructure and resiliency to future floods.

- HB 720, which relates to appropriations of water for recharge of aquifers and use in aquifer storage and recovery projects. Monitor the rulemaking process for the permitting of unappropriated flows for aquifer storage and recovery projects by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).
- HB 721, which relates to reports on aquifer storage and recovery and aquifer recharge projects. Monitor the implementation by the TWDB of legislation to encourage the development of aquifer storage and recovery and aquifer recharge projects, including the completion of a statewide study of the state's aquifers' suitability for aquifer storage and recovery and aquifer recharge projects.
- HB 722, which relates to the development of brackish groundwater. Monitor the designation of Brackish Groundwater Production Zones by the TWDB and the adoption of rules by groundwater conservation districts for the production of brackish groundwater from those Zones.
- HB 807, which relates to the state and regional water planning process. Monitor the appointment of the Interregional Planning Council by the TWDB and the Council's progress toward increasing coordination among Regional Water Planning Groups.

In conducting its oversight functions, the Committee will also monitor:

- HB 723, which relates to the requirement that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality obtain or develop updated water availability models for certain river basins.
- Updates to Groundwater Availability Models by the Texas Water Development Board

**Interim Charge 2:** Study the efforts of the TCEQ, the TWDB, and the Public Utility Commission of Texas to incentivize, promote, and preserve regional projects to meet water supply needs and encourage public and private investment in water infrastructure. Identify impediments or threats to regionalization with special emphasis on:

- Prioritization in planning and implementing the State Water Plan, Regional Water Plan, and other recommended water supply projects;
- Barriers to private investment and the development of public-private partnerships to implement needed water supply projects, including the retail water and wastewater industry, to address the state's growth challenges;
- Public water and wastewater systems that are unable to meet federal and state standards due to inadequate operational capacity and factors that prevent such systems from being integrated into larger systems and processes that more easily facilitate the sale, transfer, or merger of systems;
- State agency authority to regulate regional water supply pricing.

**Interim Charge 3:** Monitor the joint planning process for groundwater and

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the achievement of the desired conditions for aquifers by groundwater conservation districts.

**Interim Charge 4:** Monitor the State Auditor's review of agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction. The Chair shall seek input and periodic briefings on completed audits for the 2019 and 2020 fiscal years and bring forth pertinent issues for full committee consideration.

In conducting its oversight functions, the Committee will specifically monitor the following reports by the State Auditor's Office:

- An Audit Report on Selected Groundwater Conservation Districts: <http://www.sao.texas.gov/SAOReports/ReportNumber?id=19-039>
- A Summary Report on Senate Bill 1289 Provisions Related to the Water Development Board's Financial Assistance of Construction Projects: <http://www.sao.texas.gov/SAOReports/ReportNumber?id=19-019>

**The committee also seeks written submissions on the following topics:**

- Emerging issues in groundwater and surface water interaction, in particular in areas of increasing competition for scarce resources.
  - The status of water markets in Texas and the potential benefits of and challenges to expanded markets for water.
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