

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 2619

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & LIVESTOCK

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Hearing Date: April 8, 2021 8:00 AM

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Donna Gottwald

Self

Helotes, TX

I support HB 2619

Meredith McGuire, Dr.

San Antonio Sierra Club

Bulverde, TX

HB 2619 is an excellent bill, supporting some of the best practices for improvement of agriculture and its natural resources.

Jensie Madden

Self- Retired Educator

Fischer, TX

Please SUPPORT HB 2619. This bill will help leverage federal funding to support farmers interested in building healthy soils, making Texas more resilient to storms, droughts, and climate change.

Cosette Brennan

self - retired

Spring Branch, TX

I support passage of HB 2619.

William Warren

self/self

San Antonio, TX

I support this bill. As stewards of our agricultural land, farmers and ranchers should be able to participate in programs encouraging more sustainable ag practices. As we've seen, over-grazing and over-farming over the past 250 years have had permanent, damaging effects on Texas soils and woodlands. If farmers and ranchers are willing to participate in more healthy environmental practices, as we all enjoy the benefits of such, we should provide them with support. These days it's incredibly hard to be an independent farmer or rancher and we should support them any way we can.

Mobi Warren

self; retired teacher

San Antonio, TX

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This bill is a fantastic opportunity to promote healthy soil to make Texas more resilient to storms, drought, and climate change. I urge you to support and pass HB2619/SB1118.

Cheryl Hamilton, Dr.  
Self, Retired senior citizen  
San Antonio, TX

I support passage of this bill.

Kathy Denison  
Self, retired  
Bastrop, TX

I strongly support this bill to support more farmers and ranchers in moving to regenerative agriculture. These are the people I buy my good local food from! This bill is for the greater good because healthy soil management, amongst many other positive outcomes, helps reduce runoff and flooding, greater drought resilience, carbon sequestration, and healthier food. But the initial up-front costs are a significant barrier for many farmers and ranchers to transition to. This bill addresses that and supports our Texas farmers and ranchers in this endeavor.

Thank you, Kathy Denison

Marty French  
Self  
Carrollton, TX

Texas has an opportunity to lead the nation in carbon neutralization impact by supporting regenerative agricultural practices. Healthier soils means healthier food and healthier citizens. Please support this good earth legislation.

Oliver Steck  
self, Musician/Entertainer  
Austin, TX

I support passage of HB 2619

Catherine Croom, Ms.  
self/retired teacher  
Bulverde, TX

I support this bill.

Alan Montemayor, Mr.  
Self, Retired senior citizen  
San Antonio, TX

I support passage of this bill.

Rollette Schreckenghost

Self/Retired

San Antonio, TX

I strongly support this bill.

Jonathan Grant

Self/Retired

San Marcos, TX

I support passage of HB 2619.

Kathleen Graham Blue

Self - farmer

Elgin, TX

"Feed the land and the land will feed you" is more than words for me and my family--it is resourceful actions, ambitions, and achievements. As a tiny farmer raising enough poultry and vegetables for self and family, on our own tiny patch of Texas soil, it is important to feed that soil so that the soil can feed us and our livestock with nutrient-dense, healthy, vibrant foods.

Advancing this same concept to all Texans through establishment of an On-The-Ground Conservation Program and implementation of education and support programs to efficiently and effectively deliver actions, not just words, of the Feed the land and the land will feed you" concept for the current and future generations can be instrumental in an essential paradigm shift in how Texans embrace responsibility and achieve sustainability of healthy food systems through healthy soils. And, in the process of establishing the program and implementing the tenets of it, Texans might just happen to inspire other states and nations in feeding the land so the land will feed the people. It is long overdue for the responsibility to be embraced on by word of mouth from one farmer to another. This bill will assist in the voice for the Feed the land and the land will feed you concept growing from something small to something great.

Hallie Casey

Self

Austin, TX

Healthy soil is vital to the long-term viability of Texas agriculture, and the immediate mitigation of Texas water disasters.

I grew up in Texas in the '00s and '10s, and as a teenager interned at the Colorado River Alliance. I thought a drought-stricken Texas was a fact of the world. Guiding field trips through the LCRA watershed models, I taught elementary students all the tricks for saving household water and impressed on them the vital need for conservation. When I moved to California for graduate school, I remember watching in surprise as decorative public fountains ran with water, something I hadn't seen for close to a decade in my home state. With our ever-growing population, Texas can't afford to stick to the status quo. We have to start preparing for multi-year droughts in innovative ways, and this bill does that.

By investing in smarter agricultural practices, we can lessen the irrigation draw and bolster farmers' and ranchers' capacity to weather storms and droughts. Texas needs this bill.

Savannah Rugg, M.S.

Self, Dept. Chair, Agricultural Sciences at Austin Community College

Austin, TX

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Healthy soil management increases the productivity of the land and provides numerous benefits for the entire community: reduced runoff and flooding, greater drought resilience, carbon sequestration, and healthier food. But the initial up-front costs are a significant barrier for many farmers and ranchers. HB 2619 will support more farmers and ranchers in moving to regenerative agriculture. As the Department Chair of Agricultural Sciences at Austin Community College, I urge you to support HB 2619. Agriculture is big business in Texas, and as Texans we must be stewards of our land to ensure its productivity into the future.

Carol Hall, Retired Public Education Administrator  
self

New Braunfels, TX

Having grown up on a farm in Central Texas, I know the value of soil conservation and soil improvement. It is vital to the maintenance of production.

Patricia M Seidenberger

Self

San Antonio, TX

I support passage of HB2619.

Harold Stone, Associate Legislative Director

Texas Farm Bureau

Austin, TX

Chairman Burns and Committee Members,

In 1930s, Texas was in the throes of the Dust Bowl and on the heels of the great floods of the 1920s. Over-grazing and poor farming practices in combination with these catastrophic events had contributed to enormous losses of topsoil. By the late 1930s, it was clear to farmers, ranchers, and others that change was needed.

In 1939, the Texas Legislature enacted Chapter 201 of the Agricultural Code creating the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB). Chapter 201.001(d) notes:

“It is the policy of the legislature to provide for the conservation of soil and related resources of this state and for the control and prevention of soil erosion, and thereby to preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of this state, and thus to carry out the mandate expressed in Article XVI, Section 59a, of the Texas Constitution. It is further declared as a matter of legislative intent and determination of policy that the State Soil and Water Conservation Board is the state agency responsible for implementing the constitutional provisions and state laws relating to the conservation and protection of soil resources.”

Since its inception, the TSSWCB has provided leadership and assistance to local Conservation Districts and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in identifying and implementing voluntary soil and water conservation programs on agricultural lands. These efforts have resulted in continuous improvements in agricultural efficiency, water conservation, and land stewardship.

Today, Texas is faced with new environmental challenges including more frequent floods and droughts, loss of habitat due to development pressures, increased competition for water resources, and others.

Proposed HB 2619 would modernize the mission of the TSSWCB and position the agency to address these emerging concerns, while also directing the agency to seek out voluntary conservation partnerships to maximize public investments.

Texas Farm Bureau offers its support for HB 2619 and the “On-the-Ground Conservation Program”.

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