

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 2716

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Hearing Date: April 6, 2021 8:00 AM

Cyndi Jackson, Issue Chair
Texas League of Women Voters
Wimberley, TX

TESTIMONY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
April 6, 2021

I am Cyndi Jackson, Issue Chair for Water Resources and a member of the League of Women Voters of Texas. I am sending this letter IN SUPPORT OF HB 2716. Thank you for allowing us to share the League of Women Voters of Texas position on this bill.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) serves as an interested party to our State ecosystem, extending to protections of our water. Our investments in water distribution, conservation, and protection are imperative to the health of all Texans. As such, we should allow TPWD as a stakeholder, to contest water and wastewater permits that could compromise the condition and/or purpose of our water investments.

At first blush it may seem that leaving TPWD out of his loop (as set forth in changes, 2011) makes sense. They're protecting fish, right? But let's face it, if fish can't live in certain water conditions, should our children be drinking it? By allowing them to speak on our behalf, we add essential oversight to processes that already overburden TCEQ. We urge you to send this excellent bill on its way to become law.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact me at your convenience.

Cyndi Jackson

For additional information, please contact: [Name], Cyndi Jackson; Issue Chair, cyndi.g.jackson@gmail.com 512-692-7721. The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWVTX) is a nonpartisan citizens' organization that has fought since 1919 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. It represents more than 7000 members and supporters throughout Texas.

Annalisa Peace
Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance
San Antonio, TX

I submit this letter of support on behalf of the 54 member organizations of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA).

The State has made significant investment in properties managed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). In order to protect our public investments, TPWD must be allowed to contest water and waste water permits that would compromise the condition and/or purpose of these public properties and their wildlife assets.

Because the ability to contest permits was stripped from the TPWD in 2011, the agency is currently prohibited from contesting a waste water permit application by Silesia Properties, LP (Permit No. WQ0015835001) for Honey Creek Ranch MUD in Comal

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

County. TPWD's Honey Creek State Natural Area (HCNA) is the only property contiguous to and immediately down gradient and downstream of Silesia's proposed residential and commercial development. As such, TPWD would be the party most impacted by this permit should it be approved as submitted. Yet, they are unable to join GEAA, the Texas Cave Management Association, the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Bulverde Neighborhoods for Clean Water, and other contiguous landowners who have been recognized with standing to contest this permit.

Acquired by the State to protect 2,293.7 acres of this pristine Hill Country site, TPWD only allows public access by guided tour and prohibits pets in order to protect the high quality flows of the Honey Creek. Immediately downstream at the confluence of Honey Creek and the Guadalupe River is Guadalupe State Park, one of the most enjoyed water recreational spots in Texas. It seems absurd that TPWD is forbidden by the State to contest a permit that, if approved, could indelibly compromise the HCNA and the Guadalupe State Park – both managed by TPWD for the use and enjoyment of the citizens of Texas.

Although HB 2716 will not allow TPWD to employ their expertise in protecting HCNA in this instance, it would prevent from reoccurring any similar situation whereby TWDB is prohibited from meaningfully acting to protect the properties they manage. Our State parks represent substantial investments by the citizens of Texas and are worthy of all the protection we can afford. We urge you to send this excellent bill on its way to becoming law.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact me at your convenience.

Donna Gottwald

Self

Helotes, TX

I support HB 2716

Meredith McGuire, Dr.

San Antonio Sierra Club

Bulverde, TX

This bill is extremely important, because Parks and Wildlife Dept. has the expertise and local knowledge to protect environmental conditions for the public good -- a necessary strength for preventing private greed from destroying our public lands and amenities.

Jensie Madden

Self- Retired Educator

Fischer, TX

Please SUPPORT HB 2716. TPWD needs to be able to contest permits being considered by TCEQ when the permit will impact a nearby state park or natural area. These state-protected properties need state advocacy on behalf of the people of Texas.

Cosette Brennan

self - retired

Spring Branch, TX

I support HB 2716 and HIGHLY recommend its passage. It is the most important bill before the Committee in my opinion. TPWD's right to contest waste water permits should NEVER have been removed in 2011. This clearly had the effect of supporting unregulated and rampant development over the conservation of vital natural resources in the State, especially here in the Hill Country. Honey Creek SNA is one of the most pristine sites in all of Texas and it is vital it be preserved. Not everything should be about making a buck. If we don't preserve and protect our wildlife and wild places, what will the future Texas look

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

like? One big concrete jungle? It's unthinkable. Please help us preserve and protect Texas by passing this bill.

William Warren
self/self
San Antonio, TX

I support this bill. It's unfair that public investments made by Texans into preserving their natural wildlands and parks can be endangered for the benefit of private investors. We all have a stake in protecting our Parks and Wildlife and deserve the right to do.

Bo Baggs
Sierra Club - Golden Triangle Chapter
Port Arthur, TX

Dear Sirs/Madams,

It is imperative to the mission of TPWD to be able to be an active participant to contested case hearings on applications for environmental permits, including water rights, in order to protect the State's natural resources.

- Texas has a rich cultural heritage in the outdoors, and TPWD's ability to steward state-owned assets for habitat and wildlife via the agency's participation in TCEQ hearings is an important way for TPWD to provide their unique expertise and perspective, helping to ensure Texans can pass on our natural heritage and customs to future generations.
- The potential granting of permits can impact the health of Texas' rivers and bays by causing changes to water quality and/or quantity and TPWD needs to be able to ensure permits protect them.
- Texas has approximately 191,000 miles of streams, 15 major river basins, eight coastal basins.
- Texas has seven major and five minor estuaries ranging from the nearly fresh Sabine Lake, which borders Louisiana, to the frequently hypersaline Laguna Madre along the southern coast. Although each estuary differs in size, hydrologic, and ecological characteristics, together they support a diverse array of species which serve as the raw materials for a variety of economic activities associated with commercial and recreational fishing, hunting, and birding.
- TPWD manages 95 state parks, natural areas and historic sites that cover more than 630,000 acres, along with 50 wildlife management areas totaling 748,660 acres that could be adversely affected by permits issued without adequate protective provisions. TPWD needs to be able to protect the investment of Texans in these properties.

I trust you will reinforce TPWD's position and role of active participant in the aforementioned hearings on applications for environmental permits, including water rights, so the agency can fulfill its original, as-intended mission. Thank You for accepting these comments.

Native Texan Bo Baggs
Port Arthur, Texas 77642

Eva Silverfine
self

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

San Marcos, TX

I strongly support HB 2716. TPWD formerly had the ability to contest permits that would impact properties held by TPWD, in other words, properties held by the state, which amounts to the state's citizens. In being able to contest permits, TPWD is representing us. In addition, TPWD employs experts who can assess the impacts of permits, and their input is invaluable.

Mobi Warren
elf; retired teacher
San Antonio, TX

As a Texas who cares deeply about the natural resources and wildlife of our great state, I wholeheartedly support HB 2716

Laura McGrew
Self, Communications Manager for nonprofit
San Antonio, TX

I support this bill to restore the ability of the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife to contest water and wastewater permits. We must continue to protect our water sources in the face of growing development. Water is not an infinite resource, and human beings are not the only ones that rely upon it for life. Thank you for bringing this issue to the attention of Texas House.

Lori Olson
Texas Land Trust Council
Wimberley, TX

The Texas Land Trust Council supports HB 2716 by Chairman King, to restore the ability of TPWD to request and/or participate in contested case hearings on water rights and TCEQ permits that may adversely affect TPWD managed property or wildlife resources. This level of participation is essential for TPWD to carry out their agency's mission "to manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."

This bill would give TPWD a seat at the negotiating table and allow them to voice their resource concerns, as well as legal and scientific concerns. In addition, just knowing that TPWD could request a hearing would likely lead permittees to negotiate to reduce potential risks to fish and wildlife, while still meeting their needs.

Prior to 2011, TPWD had similar authority, so this legislation simply seeks to restore what is a valid agency interest in protecting the fish and wildlife resources of our state. As an agency, TPWD needs to be able to advocate for the natural resources that it is charged with managing and preserving, for the benefit of all Texans. This bill would restore a key opportunity for the agency to do just that.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

The Texas Land Trust Council is a The Texas Land Trust Council (TLTC) is a 501c3 non-profit organization working to build a strong, active coalition to serve as a powerful voice for conservation in Texas. TLTC seeks to advance and sustain land conservation throughout the state, providing programs and initiatives that ensure the continued strength and success of the conservation movement. To date, land trusts have helped to conserve more than 1.8 million acres of farms, ranches, wildlife habitat, water resources, and natural areas across the great state of Texas. TLTC is proud to support this effort.

Cindy Fuqua
Myself
San Antonio, TX

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

TPWD must have input on all permits in order to protect the areas they are responsible for on behalf of the people of Texas!

Patricia Clark, -
Self
Bulverde, TX

We strongly support HB 2716 as it will help insure that our existing waterways will remain clear and pristine.

Roy Leslie, Mr
self
San Antonio, TX

My name is Roy Leslie, my address is 110 Canyon Dr. San Antonio, Tx 78209. I am testifying FOR the bill to allow Texas Parks & Wildlife to advocate and testify on matters affecting publicly owned land and resources. It's only logical that the entity charged with managing these public resources be allowed to state its case in protecting these assets. Texas Parks & Wildlife is the state agency I most trust, and its employees are the people I want representing the interests of all who care about our natural resources.

Christine Muse
SELF
Spicewood, TX

Please vote YES for HB 2716. TPWD has the expertise and appropriate interest to engage in permits that affect the health of our State's parks and wildlife. Thank you.

Dickie Lubel
3 DR Commercial, LLC
Bulverde, TX

I support HB2716

Michael Coker
East Texas Woods and Waters Foundation
Tyler, TX

TPWD can provide an objective voice on permitting applications in Texas, and it should be given the opportunity to comment. This Bill should be approved.

Thank you for your consideration.

Karen Hixon
self, investments
San Antonio, TX

I support passage of HB 2716

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

Barbara Schmidt

Self / retired

Kingsland, TX

I strongly support this bill.

Jane W. Miller

Citizen

New Braunfels, TX

Please support this bill! Thank you.

Patrick Cox, Executive Director

Trinity Edwards Springs Protection Association - TESPA

Wimberley, TX

We support this legislation for protection of our irreplaceable groundwater and surface water resources.

Cheryl Hamilton, Dr.

self, retired senior citizen

San Antonio, TX

I support passage of this bill.

Ernest Angelo Jr

Self

Midland, TX

As a lifelong hunter and outdoorsman I strongly support this bill. TPWD needs this flexibility to do its job. As a former Commissioner and a person who keeps informed about TPWD activity I know the importance of passage of HB 2716.

Paul Sanchez-Navarro, Senior Representative

Defenders of Wildlife

Austin, TX

April 5, 2021

House Committee on Natural Resources

Rep. Tracy O. King

Rep. Cody Harris

Rep. Rhetta Andrews Bowers

Rep. Kyle J. Kacal

Rep. Lyle Larson

Rep. Eddie Lucio III

Rep. Dennis Paul

Rep. Four Price

Rep. Ana-Maria Ramos

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

Rep. Armando Walle
Rep. Terry M. Wilson

Re: HB2716 (King)

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

Defenders of Wildlife (Defenders) submits comments in full support of HB 2716 (King) to restore the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) participation in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Texas Water Development Board water permitting process.

Founded in 1947, Defenders of Wildlife is a national non-profit conservation organization focused on wildlife and habitat conservation across the country. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the organization also maintains six regional field offices and represents more than 2 million members and supporters in the United States and around the world. Defenders' Texas program, based in Austin, represents almost 100,000 members and supporters in the state.

TPWD is a public agency representing every Texan's rights and interests regarding the state's public lands and wildlife and should therefore again participate in water management through the permitting process. Without TPWD present, Texas biodiversity has no voice in the process. Without TPWD able to contest permits, endemic species like the numerous Hill Country salamanders may be affected by development projects that affect springs and creeks. Without TPWD's ability to protect state property and species, fish populations may also be negatively impacted by proposed water rights or wastewater discharge permits. Through TPWD participation in TCEQ and Development Board permits, Texans exercise their rights to protect their parks and wildlife. Stewardship of state parks and wildlife are mandated through TPWD and it has been unable to do its job in protecting our resources as part of the permitting process since 2011. This must be corrected. Water management in a state with growing water needs and challenges can only benefit with the restoration of TPWD's authority to participate in the permitting process. Texans, both human and wildlife will be better served by passing HB2716.

Sincerely,

Paul Sanchez-Navarro
Senior Representative, Texas
Defenders of Wildlife
Psanchez-navarro@defenders.org

Oliver Steck
self, Musician/Entertainer
Austin, TX

I support passage of HB 2716

Christine Thompson
Self -Retired
Canyon Lake, TX

"I support passage of hb 2716"

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

I support this bill.

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

Georgina Schwartz

self, retired

San Antonio, TX

HR 2716, Texas Parks and Wildlife should be able to defend itself and its interests/

Alan Montemayor, Mr.

Self, Retired senior citizen

San Antonio, TX

I support passage of this bill.

Michaela McCown

self - environmental educator

Waco, TX

Please support HB 2716 in order to allow TPWD to make recommendations regarding surface water use and permits as it affects wildlife and natural resources. Water basins in Texas are over-allocated, and there are many examples when the wildlife and natural resources of our state have been negatively impacted by over-use of surface water. Water in our state is a precious resource and must be used balancing the needs of our wildlife and other natural resources. TPWD, as the foremost wildlife agency in the state, should be able to have a say in how water use in Texas will impact wildlife.

Rollette Schreckenghost

Self/Retired

San Antonio, TX

I strongly support this bill.

Jonathan Grant

Self/Retired

San Marcos, TX

I support passage of HB 2716.

Jessica Leslie

self

San Antonio, TX

I am in favor of passing HB 2716 allowing the Parks and wildlife Department to be involved in matters regarding certain permits. The Department is tasked with preserving our state's natural resources and it needs to be involved in the issuing of permits that involve our natural resources. Texas has numerous rivers, streams, estuaries, natural areas, and parks that need their oversight. Please allow them to do their jobs by being involved in that permitting process. Texas wouldn't be Texas without its wild places.

Donna Taylor

Self, Environmental Scientist, Small Business Owner.

Fair Oaks Ranch, TX

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

State agencies should be able to work together for the long-term protection of Texas' natural resources that are intended to be preserved for future generations. The TCEQ Sunset bill of 2011 effectively disallowed the ability of state agencies to do so collaboratively in TCEQ permitting. By disallowing the wildlife experts of TPWD, the foremost experts in our state, to comment and participate in hearings that determine the future of state owned properties and the wildlife that belongs to ALL of Texans, a great disservice is being done to all. I am wholeheartedly in favor of this bill and am hopeful the committee will consider the importance of this bill in correcting an obviously counterproductive situation that exists. Allow TPWD to participate in the protection of Texas natural resources as demanded and expected by the residents of this great state. Respectfully submitted, Donna Taylor

David Bezanson, Interim Director, Govt Relations

The Nature Conservancy

Austin, TX

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 2716 which would reinstate the ability of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to participate in contested case hearings before the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). TPWD was stripped of this ability in 2011 and cannot testify or consult even in cases where its own lands (e.g. state parks, wildlife management areas, fish hatcheries) are directly affected. In this TPWD – one of the state's largest landowners – lacks a basic right held by almost every other landowner.

The negative consequences of this change recently became evident when a developed applied to TCEQ for a wastewater discharge permit which would substantially alter the hydrology and water quality of Honey Creek, a large spring and the state's largest cave system, located in the TPWD-owned Honey Creek State Natural Area. Any other adjacent or affected private landowner could participate in the hearing, but not TPWD.

HB 2716 would allow TPWD to request and participate in TCEQ hearings in matters where the state's wildlife resources and/or TPWD property may be affected. Even in cases where TPWD lands are not directly impacted, TPWD staff can still offer valuable expertise pertaining to scientific or legal considerations involved in a permit action. Prior to 2011, TPWD staff were involved in water right and permit approvals and their participation did not inhibit those actions, but constructively informed the permitting process.

TNC commends Chairman King for filing HB 2716, a needed correction to the Parks and Wildlife Code and Water Code which is consistent with the rights of other Texas landowners, private or public. We support HB 2716 and appreciate the Committee's consideration of our comments.

Janice Bezanson

Texas Conservation Alliance

Dallas, TX

Texas Conservation Alliance, a 50-year-old statewide organization with 48 member organizations, considers HB 2716 to be one of the most important bills in the Legislature this session and strongly support its passage. We have sent written comments to each member of the committee individually. We would appreciate your review of our comments and, most especially, your support for HB 2716.

Don Steinbach

Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society

BURTON, TX

My emailed testimony: For HB 2716

“My name is Don Steinbach, Executive Director of The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. My address is 3686 Rehburg Rd. Burton Texas 77835. I am testifying FOR the bill to allow Texas Parks & Wildlife to advocate and testify on matters affecting

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

publicly owned land and resources. It's only logical that Texas Parks and Wildlife charged with the responsibility to steward these public resources be allowed to advocate for protecting these assets. Texas Parks & Wildlife is the state agency with the expertise to full fill their legal responsibility to protect these natural resource assets for the people of Texas.

David Foster
Clean Water Action
Austin, TX

Dear Chairman King and Committee Members:

I wish to express Clean Water Action's support for HB 2716.

HB 2716 would restore the ability of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to participate in contested case hearings on applications for environmental permits, including water rights, that have potential impacts on the State's natural resources. TPWD manages 95 state parks, natural areas and historic sites that cover more than 630,000 acres, along with 50 wildlife management areas totaling 748,660 acres that could be adversely affected by permits issued without adequate protective provisions. Permits can have potential impacts on the health of Texas' rivers, bays and streams by causing changes to water quality and/or quantity. TPWD needs to be able to bring its expertise and perspective to bear on permit applications that affect natural resources that the State has entrusted it to manage.

Thank your for your consideration. Respectfully,

David Foster
State Director, Clean Water Action

Anna Farrell-Sherman
Environment Texas
Austin, TX

We support this legislation.

Linda Curtis
League of Independent Voters of Texas
Bastrop, TX

I personally and our organization, a non-profit, non-partisan association for non-aligned voters in Texas, the League of Independent Voters of Texas, support this bill, HB 2716.

Katherine Romans
Hill Country Alliance
Dripping Springs, TX

April 6, 2021

Dear Chairman King and members of the House Committee on Natural Resources,

The Hill Country Alliance (HCA) and its supporters recognize and appreciate the critical work that the House Committee on Natural Resources plays in shaping and advancing proposed legislation that impacts the water supplies of Texas. We are writing today to express our strong support for HB 2652 (Larson), HB 3619 (Bowers) and HB2716 (King), all of which are being

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

considered by the committee today.

HB 2652 would establish a groundwater and surface water advisory board to study challenges related to groundwater and surface water interactions and to make policy recommendations. As you know, as much as 30% of the base flows of Hill Country rivers are sustained by springs emerging from the Trinity and Edwards aquifers in our region. We also know that those spring-fed creeks and rivers provide critical recharge for our aquifers. And yet, current state law does not adequately recognize the intrinsic connection of these two resources. HB 2652 would be an important step forward toward better understanding how we can ‘close the gap’ between current groundwater and surface water management schemes.

HB 3619 would require that groundwater conservation districts consider impacts to domestic and livestock, ‘exempt’ wells before granting permits. This bill would provide important protections for landowners who depend on groundwater resources and ensure that the full impact of large groundwater withdrawals is considered before a permit is granted.

HB 2716 would restore the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s (TPWD’s) ability to contest water rights and permits at the TCEQ. As we’ve seen numerous times in recent years in the Hill Country, TPWD is a landowner with a very real interest in protecting its resources in the region. It is critical that TPWD be able to inform any permitting process with the impacts to state owned and state run resources such as our state parks and public waterways. This is an opportunity that TPWD has had in the past, and it is important to reinstate this ability.

The Hill Country Alliance works across a 17-county region of central Texas. Our mission is to grow an ever-expanding alliance of groups, landowners, individuals and entities working to preserve and protect the region’s water, land, night skies, and communities. We are grateful for the leadership of the House Natural Resources Committee, and would welcome any questions about this testimony.

Sincerely,

Katherine Romans
Executive Director
Hill Country Alliance

Eric LeeChee
Bayou City Waterkeeper
katy, TX

Eric LeeChee, Bayou City Waterkeeper

Bayou City Waterkeeper is in favor of HB 2716.

For nearly 20 years, Bayou City Waterkeeper has worked across the Greater Houston area to protect the bayous, creeks, bays, and wetlands within the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed and the people who depend on them. Using law and science, we collaborate with local communities to push back against irresponsible development, fill gaps in regulatory enforcement, and build community power.

The region comprising the Lower Galveston Bay watershed includes Houston’s dense urban core, the Houston shipping channel, and large pockets of industrial activity. These developed areas are interspersed with natural areas under the TPWD’s oversight, found alongside the bayous, creeks, and streams running through the region out to Galveston Bay. We believe HB 2716 will benefit communities, property, fish, and wildlife across our watershed by strengthening the role of the Texas Park and Wildlife Department in permit processes affecting these public lands.

Wastewater discharge permits authorize industrial activities that affect the health of these waterways and neighboring land. By including TPWD as an active participant in contested hearings on applications for environmental permits, we believe that HB 2716 would improve the permitting process and enable TPWD to fulfill its role of protecting our state’s natural resources on

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

behalf of all Texans in several ways:

First, by granting TPWD the statutory right to make recommendations on permit conditions, HB 2716 will help permits be tailored to protect fish, wildlife, and the land managed by TPWD, as well as local communities relying on these resources.

Second, by allowing TPWD to participate in contested case hearings for all permits which adversely affect property of wildlife managed by TPWD, HB2716 also will allow the TPWD to voice its expert opinions on the possible effects of permits affecting Texas' natural resources and strengthen the process as a whole.

Third, by allowing TPWD to participate as a full party in a hearing, it would further enhance the review of administrative law judges and strengthen the process as a whole, by providing the benefit of TPWD's presentation of evidence, engagement in discovery, cross-examination of witnesses, and legal argument.

In summary, HB 2716 would benefit Texans by giving the TPWD a stronger voice when fish, wildlife, and other natural resources are affected by proposed permits. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this comment.

Melissa Potucek Vinson

self: Firefighter/Paramedic

Bulverde, TX

I support the passage of HB 2716

Ruth Russell

DRC,LRWA, and Headwaters

San Antonio, TX

It is extremely important for TPWD to have a voice, especially if their park is nearby. They employ expert biologists in water knowledge and hydrology and its impacts on water purity and spring and aquifers recharge. We must do all we can to keep Texas waters clean and unpolluted.

Megan Brown, Rev.

self

Pflugerville, TX

I support TPWD having the ability to raise concerns regarding permits and water rights issued by the TCEQ in line with the mission of the TPWD.

Errol Summerlin

Coastal Alliance to Protect our Environment

PORTLAND, TX

I urge you to support HB 2716. Due to a family emergency, I am only now seeing this is scheduled for Committee Hearings this morning. If not to late, please support this Bill. It is essential that TPWD be re-authorized to challenge TCEQ Permits that would degrade or otherwise have a negative impact on the State's precious natural resources. They know better than anyone how much the natural systems can sustain before being impacted negatively. They should be given the authority to seek Party status in Contested Case Hearings they believe will threaten the delicate balance needed for wildlife to flourish. When they did have the authority to do so, they used it sparingly, i.e. only when the Department deemed it important and necessary. Thank you in advance for your support.

Merry Langlinais

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

Self, retired garment designer/manufacturer

Medina, TX

I support this bill.

John Newman

Newman Brothers

San Antonio, TX

I am strongly in favor of this bill. The process of regular citizens having to fight wastewater discharge permits from well-funded applicants with a State organization that is a permit granting agency is a huge waste of resources. I was recently involved in opposing the Camp OTX permit in Tarpley. Before the settlement agreement was signed we were fighting another wastewater discharge permit by Young Life in Vanderpool. Fighting these applications is extraordinarily expensive and time-consuming. To fight these applications affected parties like nearby landowners, residents, recreation-related businesses, and nature lovers are forced to spend thousands of dollars on fees for attorneys, water quality experts, and water quality reports. This bill provides a better way of protecting the State's few remaining clean rivers and streams.

Sinclair Oubre, Fr.

Port Arthur Area Shrimpers' Association

Port ARthur, TX

Dear Sir or Madam,

As the treasurer for the Port Arthur Area Shrimpers' Association, I raise my organization's support for HB 2716.

For our 160+ shrimpboat owners and dozens of crabbers in the upper Texas Gulf Coast, it is important that the voice of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department be heard in water use issues at the TCEQ. We fear that the voice of the commercial fishing community will be lost amidst the cacophony from the environmental organizations.

Patricia M Seidenberger

Self

San Antonio, TX

I support passage of HB2716.

Jessica Karlsruher

Texas Real Estate Advocacy & Defense Coalition

Austin, TX

TREAD is supportive of HB 2716.

- It is imperative to the mission of TPWD to be able to be an active participant to contested case hearings on applications for environmental permits, including water rights, in order to protect the State's natural resources.
- Texas has a rich cultural heritage in the outdoors, and TPWD's ability to steward state-owned assets for habitat and wildlife via the agency's participation in TCEQ hearings is an important way for TPWD to provide their unique expertise and perspective, helping to ensure Texans can pass on our natural heritage and customs to future generations.
- The potential granting of permits can impact the health of Texas' rivers and bays by causing changes to water quality and/or quantity and TPWD needs to be able to ensure permits protect them.
- Texas has approximately 191,000 miles of streams, 15 major river basins, eight coastal basins.
- Texas has seven major and five minor estuaries ranging from the nearly fresh Sabine Lake, which borders Louisiana, to the frequently hypersaline Laguna Madre along the southern coast. Although each estuary differs in size, hydrologic, and

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

ecological characteristics, together they support a diverse array of species which serve as the raw materials for a variety of economic activities associated with commercial and recreational fishing, hunting, and birding.

Jana Colgate

self

Center Point, TX

I support this bill.

John Barkley

Save Our Springs Alliance

Austin, TX

I support passage.

Michael Thompson

Self

Austin, TX

I strongly support this bill.

John Erskine

self

Austin, TX

I support this bill. TPWD should have statutory party status to participate in contested case hearings.

Michael Banks, Dr.

Friends of the Neches River

Jacksonville, TX

TPWD is responsible for managing and conserving Texas' natural resources so it is imperative the Department be a party to permitting actions which affect the State's natural resources coming before TCEQ. Environmental permits, water rights and in some cases, waste discharge permits could effect wildlife habitats the Department is charged with protecting and it is only right the Department should participate with TCEQ in the permitting process. Please reinstate this cooperative agency oversight by passing HB 2716.

Jeffrey Davis

All Water Guides

Wimberley, TX

It is an honor to register my unyielding support for HB 2716 (King). TPWD was given the awesome responsibility and resources to manage and conserve Texas' natural resources, which they have executed with honor and integrity and without prejudice since the department's inception in 1963. As part of these responsibilities TPWD should have the ability to be a party to state permitting actions that may adversely affect the State's natural resources. A review of TPWD personnel, policy, technology and unmatched expertise makes them uniquely qualified to participate in any and all state permitting actions related to the State of Texas' natural resources. HB 2716 will help insure that TPWD continues to uphold its responsibility a the state's most trusted steward of our

Printed on: April 8, 2021 3:41 PM

precious natural resources.

Egan Jones, Former professional geologist

Self

Austin, TX

Extreme support for this bill. TPWD is a huge advocate for Texans and Texas, including but not limited to Texans' access to clean water for recreation and usage. TPWD has State Parks on just about every major waterway in Texas. They should have a voice. I share my voice with them.

Paloma Sánchez

Self and cookie decorator

Dallas, TX

Thank you

Bonner Armbruster

Self / Fishing Guide

San Marcos, TX

As a fishing guide, river lover, and friend of TPWD, I fully support their right to input on issues effecting water resources in Texas.

Every TPWD employee I have made contact with has cared deeply for the area, and several have sought input from me, as I spend over 220 days a year on the waterways of our great state. I appreciated each officer's willingness to ask questions in an effort to understand the full picture of what was going on in a given area.

As our state and local areas grow, we need every bit of informed insight available in order to move forward while still protecting our embattled creeks, rivers, lakes, and bay systems.

Please allow those with eyes and ears closest to the resources at least some say in how they are treated.

Thank you for your time.

-Bonner Armbruster

Evelyn OHara

Self

Utopia, TX

I would like to express my support for this bill since TCEQ has proven incapable of protecting the Texas Hill Country waterways as evidenced by allowing (giving permits) to businesses to dump treated sewage in our streams.