

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Natural Resources  
For HB 3165

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 2:35 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

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Hearing Date: April 4, 2023 8:00 AM

Anne Miller  
Self  
Austin, TX

Please vote "YES" on HB 3165 and HJR 138 to create and fund the Texas Land and Water Conservation Fund.

With the rapid pace of development in Texas, now is the time to preserve green space and water resources.

Thank you for your support!

Leilani Heist  
self - teacher  
Fair Oaks Ranch, TX

I am in full support of this bill. Texas needs to fiercely protect, preserve and conserve the natural resources and precious water supply.

Kaitlin Robinson  
Self  
Boerne, TX

Support!

Shelly Schubert-Steckler  
Aransas First Land Trust  
Rockport, TX

I am in support of and would like to see HB 3165 be passed. Texas is one of the fastest growing states in the country and we need to be preserving land and water for future generations.

Jill Boullion  
Bayou Land Conservancy  
HOUSTON, TX

On behalf of Bayou Land Conservancy, a non-profit land conservation organization permanently preserving land in the Lake Houston watershed, I respectfully ask the Natural Resources Committee to advance HB 3165. Texas needs funding for both public (local and state parks) and private land conservation. To balance our robust growth and provide places for Texans to recreate, and to support our agriculture and natural resource industries. In the Lake Houston watershed conserved lands will provide a buffer against floods and drought, keep the drinking water of the state's largest metro area cleaner, and provide connected wildlife habitat. Please support the Texas Land & Water Conservation Fund by approving this bill. Thank you.

Dan Byfield  
American Stewards  
Georgetown, TX

Creating a \$2 billion fund in Texas to buy conservation easements to set aside Texas farm, ranch and forest lands is unacceptable. Unwittingly, or not, this is implementing President Biden's 30x30 agenda in Texas to set aside 30 percent of our nation's lands and waters by 2030 and this bill creates the vehicle to assist his administration's agenda. This bill should not be considered and stopped.

Rebecca Marvil  
Self  
Houston, TX

We need this fund in order to preserve and generate new green spaces, farmland and access to nature for all Texans and future generations.

Brian Smyth  
self/Northwind Exploration  
Houston, TX

I urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of a fund for land and water conservation is essential for protecting our parks, wildlife, clean water, and open spaces. Thank you for your support.

Russell Waddill  
Myself as environmental advocate / Board member of TNC  
Fort Worth, TX

My name is Russ Waddill, and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more. Texas is growing faster than any state in the US with 7 of the top 15 fastest growing cities in the US (Fort Worth is the 3rd fastest growing in the country). I want my grown kids and future grandchildren with healthy parks and green spaces. And it is increasingly important for storm mitigation and to encourage plant and animal species to continue to thrive.

Mark Konen, mr  
Myself  
Austin, TX

My name is Mark Konen, and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more.

Norma Marini  
Aransas First Land Trust  
Rockport, TX

I support this bill!

Jarrell Burton  
Aransas First Land Trust  
Rockport, TX

Please support HB 3165. Land and water conservation is critical for for preserving parks, wildlife, and for protecting our water supply in this time of dramatic population expansion.

Julia Mirphy  
Self, community planner  
Boerne, TX

I urge you to support the Texas Land and Water Fund to protect and preserve the natural assets that contribute to our quality-of-life and economic sustainability. Water and land give us life, food, recreation, beauty, habitat, and heritage. Thank you for ensuring Texas remains the greatest state in the nation by ensuring the viability of our most precious resources!

Ann McDaniel  
Self  
Rockport, TX

HB 3165: My name is Ann McDaniel, and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more.

Cody Meglio  
Self; CPA  
Spring, TX

I support HB 3165 and its accompanying bill, HJR 138. I live in the White Oak Creek-West Fork San Jacinto River watershed in Montgomery County. I believe land conservation is tremendously important, particularly in the Houston area given climate change, sprawl, and the increasing prevalence of severe weather events. I also really enjoy the outdoors and spend a lot of time along the Spring Creek Greenway. These bills would allocate funds that Texas is already slated to receive from the federal government to worthwhile projects that will help to protect our natural resources while simultaneously expanding public park access for Texans, all at no incremental cost to taxpayers. I encourage the Texas Legislature to pass the bill.

Michael Nelson  
Self - Accountant  
Houston, TX

HB 3165 makes complete sense to approve. Fully support passing this bill.

Alexandra Noll, Esq.  
Bayou Land Conservancy  
Houston, TX

HB 3165 would establish and create a governing board for the TLWCF led by the General Land Office that includes the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, and Texas Water Development Board. The bill provides base eligibility guidelines for projects and splits funding for the conservation of agricultural lands, water resources, and wildlife habitat, as well as state and local parks, wildlife management areas, and other public access conservation projects.

This bill would allow voters to protect and preserve the Texas landscape for future generations by dedicating funds from the Economic Stabilization Fund to create the TLWCF. Recent polling shows that 83% of Texans would support the dedication of state revenue to establishing a state conservation fund. With excess dollars in the Economic Stabilization Fund, Texas Legislators have a once in a generation opportunity to act now to constitutionally dedicate \$2 billion to the TLWCF. The TLWCF can be dedicated as either a trust fund or an endowment, thus funding meaningful land and water conservation into the state's future.

I strongly encourage support of this bill.

Earl Matthew, MD  
Aransas First land trust, Texas Land Conservancy , Texas Conservation Alliance  
Rockport, TX

“My name is Earl Matthew, and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more.”

Kathryn Hallberg  
Self  
Briarcliff, TX

This bill will help preserve, farmland, cattle ranches, natural resources and protect water resources. This bill will help Texans preserves their way of life from generations ago, to generations to come. It will preserve the beautiful landscape of Texas and keep it with beautiful open ranges and more parks. It will keep farmland and cattle land producing for the economy and the people of Texas. This bill will not only preserve lands and water resources it will preserve a way of life. There is no downside to this bill, it functions off of interest earned and will not raise taxes.

Lily Rerecich  
Self, student  
Austin, TX

As a Young Texan, I support bill HB 3165. The unique natural wonder of our state is a source of deep pride. Taking such important and positive steps as this bill is key to supporting and protecting Texas in our future.

Janae Evans  
Self/real estate broker  
Rockport, TX

My name is Janae Evans, and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more. Thank you!

Debra Scott  
Self  
Pflugerville, TX

SUPPORT. This bill is an excellent start to protecting and improving the quality of life for Texas. It has the potential to conserve critical water supplies, provide outdoor recreational opportunities, maintain habitat for wildlife, and other facets of natural resources management necessary for securing a stable economy for Texans.

Laura Whiting  
Myself (an attorney) and on behalf of The Nature Conservancy (Texas Chapter Board of Trustees Vice Chair)  
Dallas, TX

My name is Laura Whiting. I'm an attorney, wife and mother in Dallas. It is imperative that you support and vote for passage of HB 3165. Our open spaces and working lands, which all Texans need for abundant clean water, biodiversity and food production, let alone general enjoyment, are rapidly disappearing to residential and commercial development. Moving forward, we need to implement smart policy to manage what is left for the benefit of all. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund is just such a smart policy and will go very far toward preserving State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more. Texans of all political stripes love and want to invest public dollars in our lands and water. Please don't let this last opportunity pass us by. Thank you.

Louise Smyth  
self  
Austin, TX

My name is Louise Smyth and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more.

RACHAEL DIAZ  
Self, Teacher  
ROCKPORT, TX

Please support this bill for the sake of our children and grandchildren. Thank you so much!

Matthew Schooler  
Self on behalf of TNC  
Dallas, TX

My name is Matt Schooler, and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more

Sarah Fulton-Smith  
American Farmland Trust  
Denton, TX

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing today, on behalf of American Farmland Trust, to express our support of the establishment of the Texas Land and Water Conservation Fund (TLWCF) as detailed in HB 3165 and HJR 138.

American Farmland Trust is the only national non-profit organization that takes a holistic approach to agriculture, focusing on the land itself, the agricultural practices used on that land, and the farmers and ranchers who do the work. Since our founding in 1980, AFT has helped permanently protect 7 million acres of agricultural land, advanced environmentally sound farming practices on millions of additional acres and helped support thousands of farm families.

In 2022, AFT's Farms Under Threat research clearly indicated that Texas has the highest concentration of threatened agricultural land in America – with a potential 2.2 million acres projected to be converted to real estate development by 2040. Further, 8 of the 12 counties in the nation projected to lose the most agricultural land to real estate development are in Texas, including Bexar, Harris, Tarrant, Fort Bend, Collin, Travis, Denton and Hidalgo counties.

The loss of these farms and ranches would have a direct impact on Texans. This translates into the potential loss of 11,900 farms and ranches, 26,200 jobs and \$479 million in agricultural output. Tragically, most of this conversion is expected to take place on Texas' best and most productive agricultural land.

Texas has proven that there is ample demand from farmers and ranchers to protect their agricultural land. Since 2005, the Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program has helped to permanently protect nearly 53,000 acres of agricultural land through voluntary land conservation easements with farmers and ranchers across the state. However, it is vastly oversubscribed – there are not nearly enough funds to keep up with demand, and large-scale projects are not possible through this program. Agricultural conservation easement programs are an essential tool to protecting our quickly disappearing farms and ranches. Alongside land trusts and local and federal agencies, these programs enable farmers and ranchers to keep their land in private ownership and active agriculture, while providing funding that many families reinvest in their agricultural businesses and assist in bringing a new generation on to the land.

A stable, consistent source of state funding that envisioned through the TLWCF is important to meet landowner demand for private land conservation. The TLWCF will enable many more farmers and ranchers in Texas to protect their land, helping farming and ranching families to stay on the land, supporting their livelihoods and their communities. The TLWCF strikes an important balance between agricultural conservation and development and we fully endorse its passage through the House Committee on Natural Resources. Thank you for your time in considering our statement of support.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Fulton-Smith

Ann Schooler  
Self on behalf of TNC  
Dallas, TX

My name is Ann Schooler, and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more

Maureen Crocker  
Aransas First  
Rockport, TX

HB 3165 - My name is Maureen Crocker and I support creation of a TX Land and Water Conservation Fund to support local habitat.

Nancy Clay, retired  
self retired  
Mason, TX

I am against the bill.

Andy Jones  
The Conservation Fund  
Austin, TX

I strongly support the passage of HB3165 along with HJR128.

Ellen Buchanan  
Big Thicket Natural Heritage Trust  
Kountze, TX

We support the TX Land and Water Conservation Fund. Please give all consideration to its passage.

Carolyn Rospierski  
Self  
Cypress, TX

Please support finds for land and water conservation

Maureen Powers  
Travis Audubon Society  
Austin, TX

I support this bill because the growing population of Texas needs protected land and water resources for the enjoyment of all.

Lindsay Lawley Rerecich, Dr.  
Self, Professor  
Austin, TX

I support the creation of a land and water conservation fund to protect our state's natural areas and resources. Conservation is a rare opportunity for true bipartisan cooperation, appealing to both the environmental concerns of progressives and the principles of careful preservation for conservatives. Further, as a parent, I am particularly appreciative of legislation that seeks to safeguard natural spaces for the many forms of life that depend on them and for future generations of Texans who have the right to see all of that life for themselves.

Jonathan Beall, President  
Wilbarger Creek Conservation Alliance  
Austin, TX

As Texas grows, our parks, open space, and recreational opportunities need to keep up. This bill would help preserve and protect our wonderful natural assets, and make them available to everyone.

Amber Arseneaux  
Self - conservation professional  
Cleburne, TX

As a life-long Texan, I support this bill that will invest in the protection of our open spaces, natural resources, and agricultural heritage for the benefit of current and future Texans.

Carolyn Lux  
Self/Retired Nurse  
Fredericksburg, TX

I am not in favor of this bill. It will make it easier for the 30/30 project to be implemented in Texas. Private land needs to stay private.

Mary Bernard  
Big Thicket Biosphere Reserve  
Lumberton, TX

ATTN: Rep. E. Bailes: We need to ensure that private and public lands are included in conservation funding and support the establishment of a board to protect Texas lands with the Land and Water Conservation Fund (HB 3165). While funding for State Parks is a good thing, it does not cover the entire scope of what is needed in Texas to conserve our natural resources. We support a board comprised of wildlife, water, sportsmen's, farmers, and environmental organizations will likely provide a broad-spectrum of conservation interests to protect Texas water resources, agricultural resources, flood mitigation, wildlife habitats, and parks. Please vote in support of restoration and conservation of Texas natural resources Land and Water Conservation funding.

Carolyn Hiza  
self  
Fredonia, TX

I am against this bill.

Jamie Sparks  
Self  
Fredericksburg, TX  
Against

Sherry Eller  
Self  
Temple, TX

I oppose HB 3165. Please do not pass this bill out of committee.

Ruth Pledger, self  
self  
Mason, TX

I am against the bill

Jeannette Hormuth  
Self, waitress  
Fredericksburg, TX

My name is Jeannette Hormuth From Gillespie County and I am representing myself.

I am AGAINST HB3165. I pray the House will vote AGAINST this bill.

Thank you.

Judy Koch  
self  
Mason, TX

I am against this bill.

Phyllis Estill  
self  
Mason, TX

I am opposed to this bill.

Sheba Kothman  
Kothman Ranch Co., West Texas Helicopters Co.  
Mason, TX

We stand against this bill.

Tracy Knudsen  
Self  
Fredericksburg, TX

Against HB3165

Sandra Davidson  
self  
Mason, TX

I am opposed to this bill.

David Davidson  
self  
Mason, TX

We want to protect our property rights and stand in opposition to this bill.

Barbara Pluenneke  
Pluenneke Ranch  
Mason, TX

We are against this bill to take control of our land.

Virginia Cadwallader  
Self  
San Antonio, TX

I am AGAINST this bill and request that you not allow it to pass out of committee. Thank you.

Lauren Oberman Newburn  
Myself  
Alamo Heights, TX

I am AGAINST this bill and request that you not allow it to pass out of committee.

Kari Spence, Ms  
myself on behalf of TNC  
Dallas, TX

"My name is Kari Spence, and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more."

Anne Brockenbrough, Rancher  
Wilbarger Creek Conservation Alliance  
Manor, TX

I fully support HB 3165

I am a rancher and I have a conservation easement on my ranch that has enabled me to keep it in production—producing local beef and hay. Conservation easements have been invaluable for working farmers and ranchers in my area—allowing them to stay on the land they love. I strongly support this bill because it will help farmers and ranchers like me who want to voluntarily place conservation easements on their land.

Carol Dinkins  
Self and self on behalf of The Nature Conservancy (retired lawyer)  
Houston, TX

I am Carol Dinkins, a former chair of the Board of The Nature Conservancy and current trustee emeritus, past member of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission, member of the State Parks Advisory Committee (I do not speak for the Committee) and chaired Governor Bush's Conservation Task Force in 2000. HB 3165 is an enormously important step into Texas' future. Please support it wholeheartedly. Our great state has remarkable lands, water sources, and wildlife. Being a uniquely remarkable place, it is experiencing immense population growth and development pressure. Land and wildlife habitat are increasingly fragmented and subject to development pressure. This Fund will make possible thoughtful, sustainable, achievable protection for the public, our land that is so productive of agriculture and the natural world, and our waters critical to support us. Please do all you can to bring this Fund into being.

Lori Olson, Executive Director  
Texas Land Trust Council  
Wimberley, TX

The Texas Land Trust Council fully supports HB 3165 and HJR 138 filed by Representative Justin Holland.

Texas has long been known as a beacon for economic growth and our state's population is soaring due to the economic opportunity that it provides. Recent demographics estimate that we are welcoming more than 1,500 new Texans each and every day, which puts our population on track to hit over 40 million by the year 2050. All of this economic success has meant mostly good things for our state, but our water, our wildlife, and our wide-open spaces are suffering. Texas needs to strike a balance, and quickly, by investing in the strategic preservation of the precious natural and open lands that provide Texas with our food, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and water resources. Texas has the opportunity to lead on this issue by creating the Texas Land and Water Conservation Fund that can be put to work to protect important conservation priorities across the state. In fact, Texas is only one of only 14 states that does not have this type of statewide conservation fund. Florida, Alabama, and North Carolina, to name just a few, have funded their state's conservation efforts, resulting in innumerable positive outcomes for communities, including expanded hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities, clean drinking water, improved food security, and flood mitigation. This type of state-level conservation funding will help to sustain farming and ranching operations, provide habitat for wildlife to thrive, improve our water quality and flood resilience, and enhance recreational opportunities for all Texans. Our state prides itself in thinking big and dreaming big. Texans also have a great love for our natural resources, our wildlife, and the diverse wide-open spaces that define the Lone Star State. It is high time for Texas to invest in these cherished lands and waters by creating a large-scale, long-term, statewide funding mechanism for conservation- the Texas Land and Water Conservation Fund. We stand in solidarity with over 55 wildlife, water, agricultural, and parks organizations from across the state who support this effort. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important bills that are essential to Texas' future.

Erin Fox  
Audubon Texas  
College Station, TX

I respectfully encourage you to pass HB 3165, designed to provide grants for projects that support, enhance, and protect state and local parks and recreation areas, working agricultural lands and water resources, wildlife habitat areas, and more.

Texas is home to 7 of the top 15 most rapidly growing cities in the county and currently leads the nation in the loss of rural working lands to development, losing over 240,000 acres a year. Research also shows that 78% of Texas counties will not have sufficient parks in the coming decades. Texas needs additional parks, open spaces, and natural habitats in order to preserve our quality of life, provide food and fiber, clean water, and the support the multi-billion-dollar agricultural and outdoor recreation economy.

HB 3165 would establish and create a governing board for the TLWCF, led by the General Land Office and provides base eligibility guidelines for projects and splits funding for the conservation of a wide array of conservation projects. Support your voters-- recent polling shows that 83% of Texans would support the dedication of state revenue to establishing a state conservation fund.

With excess dollars in the Economic Stabilization Fund, Texas Legislators have a once in a generation opportunity to act now to constitutionally dedicate \$2 billion to meaningful land and water conservation action. If our land prospers, so do we.

Monica Clark  
Aransas First Land Trust  
Rockport, TX

My name is Monica Clark, and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more.”

Bill Burge, Board Member  
Aransas First  
Rockport, TX

“My name is Bill Burge and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more.

kimberly kothman  
West Texas Helicopters Inc  
sheffield, TX

We are landowners and Ranchers. We absolutely are against the land grab of HB 3165, taking 30% of our land by 2030!

kimberly kothman  
Self  
sheffield, TX

As a landowners and a rancher- we are absolutely against the land grab bill of HB 3165.

Kenn Kothman  
West Texas Helicopters, Inc  
Sheffield, TX

As a landowner and rancher, We are absolutely against the land grab of HB 3165

Kenn Kothman  
self  
Sheffield, TX

As a landowner and rancher, we are completely against HB 3165

Kenn Kothman  
Kothman Ranch Co  
Sanderson, TX

As a landowner and rancher, we are absolutely against the HB 3165

Kenn Kothman  
Continental Helicopters Inc  
Sanderson, TX

As a landowner and a rancher, we are absolutely against HB 3165

Kimberly Kothman  
Kothman Ranch Co.  
Sanderson, TX

As a landowner and rancher, we are absolutely against HB 3165

Kimberly Kothman  
Continental Helicopters Inc  
Sanderson, TX

As a landowner and rancher, we are against HB 3165

Lukin Gilliland, Jr., Mr.  
Myself, on behalf of The Nature Conservancy  
San Antonio, TX

My name is Lukin Gilliland, Jr., and I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 3165. The creation of the Texas Land & Water Conservation fund would provide for enhanced conservation efforts across Texas to protect and preserve State and local parks, working lands, open spaces, wildlife habitat, water resources and more.

Brittany Benz  
Self  
Pflugerville, TX

Texas needs effective conservation efforts now more than ever. Please pass this bill.