

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Ways & Means
For HB 1256

Compiled on: Monday, March 24, 2025 3:29 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.

Hearing Date: March 24, 2025 2:00 PM

Marie Camino, Ms.

The Nature Conservancy in Texas
Austin, TX

March 24th, 2025

House Ways and Means

Room JHR 140, 2:00pm

RE: The Nature Conservancy in Texas' support for HB 1256/HJR 88

Chair Meyer and Members of The Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1256 and HJR 88, which would allow county commissioners to exempt rainwater harvesting systems from property taxes. The Nature Conservancy in Texas (TNC) has worked to protect the lands and waters on which all life depends for over 60 years. In that time, we have conserved over 1 million acres of land and 200+ miles of rivers and streams in our great state.

Texas is experiencing rapid and widespread land conversion, losing nearly a quarter million acres of habitat and working lands each year, largely replaced by impervious surfaces, leading to loss of biodiversity, water quality challenges and flooding. Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) use or imitate natural features and processes to increase community resilience, and include natural infrastructure practices like stormwater parks, rainwater harvesting, bioswales, permeable pavement, and more. These strategies increase our ability to mitigate the worst impacts of severe weather.

HB 1256/HJR 88 is a bicameral, bipartisan strategy to incentivize homeowners to combat flooding in their communities by collecting rainwater. It is also in line with recommendations in the State Flood Plan, which encourages local governments to adopt NBS strategies. This legislation provides additional flood management options to communities that need it.

Thank you,

Marie Camino
Government Relations Program Manager
The Nature Conservancy in Texas
Marie.camino@tnc.org

Usman Mahmood
Bayou City Waterkeeper
Houston, TX

Bayou City Waterkeeper supports HB 1256 and HJR 88, which would authorize county commissioner courts to adopt ad valorem tax exemptions for properties with water conservation systems, rainwater harvesting, and graywater systems. These bills represent an economic incentive that would advance Texas' water security by encouraging homeowners and businesses to invest in sustainable water use. As our state faces increasing water supply challenges and infrastructure strains, these proposed tax exemptions would provide benefits by reducing pressure on existing municipal water supplies and strengthening resilience against drought conditions.

We recommend the legislation distinguish between residential and commercial exemption rates by establishing tiered exemption thresholds for homeowners and businesses based on size and water usage profiles.

While the fiscal note acknowledges potential initial reductions in taxable property values, local jurisdictions maintain flexibility through no-new-revenue and voter-approval tax rate adjustments, allowing communities to balance fiscal responsibility with critical water conservation goals.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact Guadalupe Fernandez at? guadalupe@bayoucitywaterkeeper.org or Usman Mahmood at usman@bayoucitywaterkeeper.org with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Guadalupe Fernandez
Policy & Partnerships Manager

Usman Mahmood
Policy Analyst

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Brian Zabcik
Save Barton Creek Association
Temple, TX

SBCA works to protect streams and aquifers in Central Texas. That means protecting both water quality and water quantity. HB 1256 will help with both goals. Incentivizing rainwater harvesting will reduce the amount of utility or well water that a property owner will need. Incentivizing onsite greywater reuse will reduce the amount of wastewater that will need to be piped away and dispersed offsite.

KATHY TURNER
SELF
McGregor, TX
OPPOSE!!!