

**Lower Rio Grande Valley  
Water Quality and  
Management Conference**

**April 10, 2014**

Presented by:  
**David Méndez**  
and  
**Claudia Russell**

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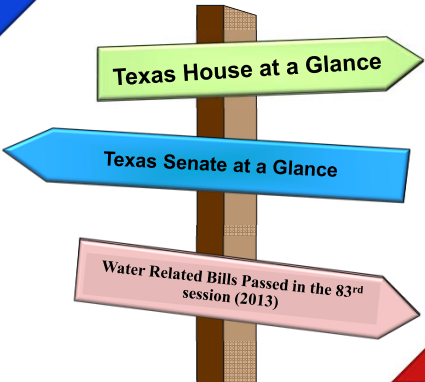
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**Topics for Today's Discussion**



**Texas House at a Glance**

**Texas Senate at a Glance**

**Water Related Bills Passed in the 83<sup>rd</sup>  
session (2013)**

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**Texas House at a Glance**

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**Current Partisan Split is  
95 Republicans and 55 Democrats**



- Incumbents and Primaries:
  - 12 incumbents retired at end of 2013 (all but one are Republicans)
  - 8 incumbents defeated in primaries (all but two are Republicans)
- Runoffs:
  - 10 seats with runoffs on May 27, 2014 (all but one in GOP-leaning districts)

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**Texas Senate at a Glance**

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**Current Partisan Split is  
19 Republicans and 12 Democrats**



- Incumbents and Primaries:
  - 1 Republican incumbent retired
  - 1 Republican incumbent defeated in primary; 3 Republican incumbents ran for another office
- Runoffs:
  - 1 seat with runoff on May 27, 2014

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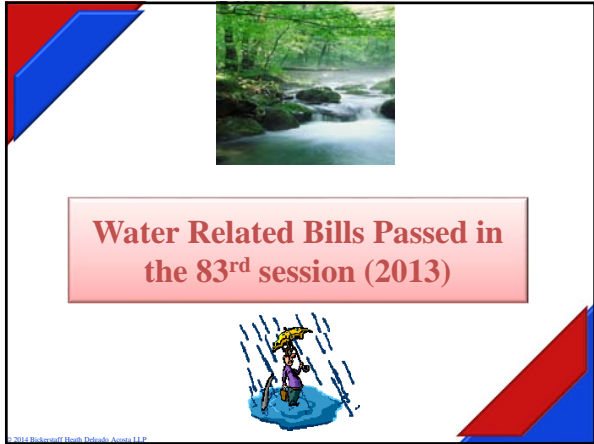
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Water Related Bills Passed in the 83<sup>rd</sup> session (2013)

This slide features a central text box with a red border containing the title. Above the text is a photograph of a river flowing through a lush green forest. Below the text is a cartoon illustration of a person holding a yellow umbrella in the rain. The slide is decorated with red and blue diagonal stripes in the corners. A small copyright notice is visible in the bottom left corner.

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### HB 252



- Additional Reporting Requirements
- Notify TCEQ when utility reasonably certain water supply is less than 180 days
- Must also report projected water supplies

HB 252 is titled in large blue font. To the right is the TCEQ logo, which consists of a stylized sun and waves above the letters 'TCEQ'. The slide includes a bulleted list of three items. It features red and blue diagonal stripes in the corners and a small copyright notice in the bottom left.

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### HB 857



- Frequency of Water Audits
- Before, utilities must perform and file water loss audit to TWDB every 5 years
- Now, all utilities providing water to more than 3,300 connections must perform and file water loss audit annually

HB 857 is titled in large blue font. To the right is an illustration of a green water tower. The slide includes a bulleted list of three items. It features red and blue diagonal stripes in the corners and a small copyright notice in the bottom left.

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### HB 1461



- More Reporting Requirements
- Utilities required to file water audit must notify customers of water loss
- More awareness about conservation

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### HB 1600



- Public Utility Commission of Texas' Sunset Bill
- Transferred to the PUC the TCEQ's water and wastewater rate jurisdiction
- Also transferred the CCN responsibilities

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### HB 1973



- Fire Flows
- Before, investor owned and WSCs servicing cities did not have to provide fire flows service
- Posed emergency response concerns
- Now, a city can adopt fire flow standards established by the TCEQ for IOUs and WSCs providing service within city or its ETJ

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**HB 2105**



- Authorizes Brownsville to acquire and maintain resacas with respect to a utility system
- Allows board of trustees to collect service charges authorized under the bill

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**HB 2615**

- Increases penalties for failure to timely file water use report
- Establishes a penalty for failure to make monthly water use information available to TCEQ upon request
- Surface water right 5,000 acre-feet or less-- \$100/day
- Surface water right more than 5,000 acre-feet-- \$500/day

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**SB 611**



- Urbanization of districts originally created to deliver irrigation water
- Makes changes as to how water districts engage in the delivery of irrigation water and determine assessments and charges

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**HB 4** 

- Changed the governance at the TWDB
- 6 part-time board members to three full-time board members
  - Engineering
  - Finance
  - Law or business
- Established the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) to be administered by the TWDB

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**HB 4**  
**(continued)**



- Revolving loan program
- Objective is to provide financial assistance to ensure future water supplies for Texas
- Provides a source of revenue for programs and serves as a cash flow mechanism
- Supports low-interest loans, longer repayment terms, incremental repurchase terms for projects with state ownership, interest and deferral of loan payments

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**HB 4**  
**(continued)**

- No grants
- Eligible- cities, counties, water districts, river authorities, irrigation districts, regional water authorities, and nonprofit water supply corporations
- Regional water planning groups are directed to prioritize projects using criteria in the legislation

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**HB 4**  
**(continued)**

- At least 20 percent of the SWIFT must support water conservation and reuse projects
- At least 10 percent of SWIFT must support projects serving rural communities and Texas farmers
- Supports projects in the state water plan 
- Projects- conservation and reuse, desalination of groundwater and seawater, new pipelines and developing reservoirs and well fields

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**HB 4**  
**(continued)**

- Water plan project prioritization will occur on two levels:
  - At the regional level, planning groups will identify critical water supply projects for their areas
  - At the state level, TWDB will establish a scoring system to prioritize those water projects applying for SWIFT funding
    - Criteria will consider things like how many people will be served by the project, whether the project will serve a diverse urban and rural population, and the ranking by the region
    - Other considerations include the local financial contribution, emergency needs for water, and the project's impact on conservation

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**HB 4**  
**(continued)**

- The \$2 billion investment in the SWIFT will be protected by the Texas Treasury Safe Keeping Trust Company (Texas Trust), a special entity created by the legislature to manage, invest and safeguard the funds
- The trust will be responsible for managing and investing the SWIFT's assets and must adopt a written investment policy
- The trust will disburse money from the fund as directed by TWDB no more than twice a fiscal year

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**HB 4**  
**(continued)**

- HB 4 also created an advisory committee:
  - Texas Comptroller
  - Three legislative members appointed by the Lt. Governor
  - Three legislative members appointed by the Speaker of the House

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**HB 4**  
**(continued)**

- Speaker appointments:
  - Rep. Allan Ritter of Nederland 
  - Rep. Drew Darby of San Angelo 
  - Rep. Eddie Lucio III of Brownsville 

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**HB 4**  
**(continued)**

- SWIFT timeline:
  - TWDB will issue proposed rules which starts the formal comment period in June 2014
  - Regional water planning groups must submit draft prioritization of projects to the TWDB in June 2014
  - Regional water planning groups must submit their final prioritization of projects by September 1st 2014
  - SWIFT advisory committee must submit recommendations to the TWDB regarding rules relating to the allocation of funds for prioritizing projects by September 1st 2014
  - TWDB will adopt final rules in December 2014
  - Monies will be available in March 2015

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**HB 4**  
**(continued)**

- Get involved by attending regional water planning group meeting
- The next Region M (Rio Grande) meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 30, 2014 at 9:30 a. at the LRGVDC Transportation Center in Weslaco, Texas



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