



# Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Quality and Management Conference

**April 10, 2014**

Presented by:

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and

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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)**



# Texas House at a Glance

# 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)



# Texas Senate at a Glance

# 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



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



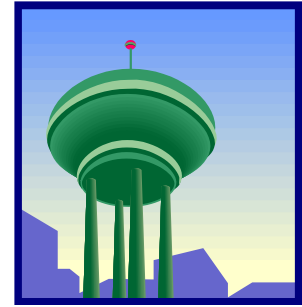
# HB 252



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



# HB 857



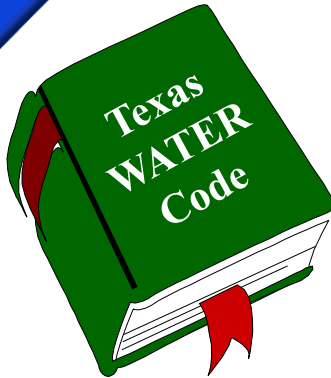
- Frequency of Water Audits
- Before, utilities must perform and file water loss audit to TWDB every 5 years
- Now, all utilities providing water to more than 3,300 connections must perform and file water loss audit annually

# HB 1461



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

# 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

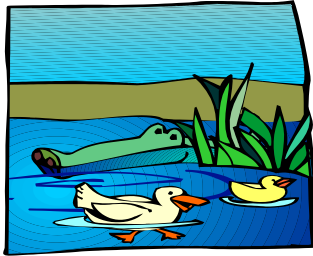


# HB 1973




- 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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



# 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

# 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

# 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



# 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

# 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

# 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

# HB 4

(continued)

- Speaker appointments:

- Rep. Allan Ritter of Nederland



- Rep. Drew Darby of San Angelo



- Rep. Eddie Lucio III of Brownsville



# 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



# 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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