

Memo

To: Alan Day
From: Heather Harward
cc: Monique Norman
Date: January 8, 2019
Re: Legislative Update

TEXAS LEGISLATURE

The 86th Texas Legislature convened on Tuesday, January 8, 2019. Newly elected members were sworn into the Texas Senate and the Texas House of Representatives. Following 140 days, the 86th Legislature will adjourn Sine Die on May 27, 2019.

Texas Senate

Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick (R) did not preside over the Texas Senate on opening day as he was in Washington, D.C. attending a meeting with President Donald Trump. Senator Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound) served as presiding officer of the Senate. Senator Kirk Watson (D-Austin) was elected President Pro Tempore, a ceremonial role that puts him third in line for the governorship after Patrick.

Texas House of Representatives

Representative Dennis Bonnen (R-Angleton) was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives by a vote of 147-0. Representatives Dustin Burrows (R-Lubbock), Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston), Mary Gonzalez (D-Clint), Lyle Larson (R-San Antonio), and Eddie Lucio, III (D-Brownsville) provided privileged nominating speeches.

Inaugural Activities

Governor Greg Abbott (R) and Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick will be sworn in on Tuesday, January 15, 2019, at 11:00 a.m. The Inaugural Ball will be held later that evening at 8:00 p.m.

State of the State

Governor Abbott's "State of the State Address to the 86th Legislature" has not yet been scheduled, but will likely take place in late January. It is customary for the Governor to address emergency items and legislative priorities during the "State of the State."

Biennial Revenue Estimate (BRE)

On Monday, January 7, 2019, Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar (R) released the BRE projecting that there would be about \$119.1 billion in state funds available for the next two-year budget, up from \$110.2 in the last two-year cycle. Hegar also reported that the State's Economic Stabilization Fund, commonly referred to as the Rainy Day Fund, is projected to reach a record high balance of \$15 billion.

Senate Committee on Agriculture Water and Rural Affairs (SAWR)

SAWR released their report on "2017 Interim Legislative Charges: Hurricane Harvey Response" (#s 1-3) on Friday, November 2, 2018. To review the report related to Hurricane Harvey, visit: <https://senate.texas.gov/cmte.php?c=505>.

SAWR released their report on "2017 Interim Legislative Charges: 2" (#s 1-3 & monitoring charge) on Friday, November 30, 2018. To review the report, visit: <https://senate.texas.gov/cmte.php?c=505>.

House Natural Resources Committee (HNRC)

HNRC released their 168-page "Interim Report to the 86th Texas Legislature" in December 2018. To review the report, visit: <https://house.texas.gov/committees/reports/>.

Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas

On December 13, 2018, Governor Greg Abbott's Commission to Rebuild Texas, chaired by Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp, issued their report, "Eye of the Storm." The report offers to the Texas Legislature wide-ranging recommendations to help Texas better prepare for future catastrophic storms in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. To review the report, visit: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/commission-to-rebuild-texas-offers-post-harvey-recommendations-to-legislature>.

TEXAS WATER DEVELOPMENT BOARD (TWDB)

The TWDB met on Thursday, December 14, 2018, to approve their "86th Session Legislative Priorities Report." To review the report, visit: <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/board/2018/12/board/index.asp> (see item #2). TWDB also approved their final "State Flood Assessment." To view the report, visit: http://www.twdb.texas.gov/newsmedia/press_releases/2018/12/flood.asp

TWDB will hold their "Water for Texas 2019" Conference on Wednesday, January 22 through Friday, January 25, 2019, at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center in Austin.

TEXAS ALLIANCE OF GROUNDWATER DISTRICTS (TAGD)

TAGD will hold their Regular Business Meeting on Tuesday, January 22, 2019, and their Legislative Committee Meeting on Wednesday, January 23, 2019, in Austin at the Omni Austin Hotel Southpark. Sarah Schlessinger announced that she will be stepping down as Executive Director of TAGD in order to run the Texas Water Foundation.

TEXAS WATER CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (TWCA)

The full TWCA Groundwater Committee held meetings on Wednesday, November 28 and Thursday, November 29, 2018, to receive reports from their subcommittees. Following the meeting of the full TWCA Groundwater Committee, an electronic survey was distributed to all members of the committee to vote on consensus items for the 86th Legislature. Six issue areas (brackish water, exports, water conservation, abandoned wells, SB 1392 rewrite, and BRAC/GAM funding) received the required 90% consensus threshold.

TWCA will hold their Annual Convention March 6-8, 2019, at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa.