

A Message from the Executive Director



By Carol Batterton, Executive Director

Interim Charges for Texas House

Texas House of Representatives' Speaker Joe Straus released interim charges for House committees in November. Interim charges for the House Environmental Regulation Committee include:

- Examine the regulation of air quality in the areas of permitting new and modified sources, public participation, and enforcement. Consider data and proposed federal standards and rules as they relate to the State Implementation Plan.
- Survey existing recycling programs and suggest needed improvements.
- Monitor federal legislative and regulatory initiatives as they pertain to climate change. Consider Texas' responses to proposals and make recommendations as to any further preparations.
- Study the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's use of supplemental environmental projects in its enforcement process.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction

Interim charges for House Natural Resources Committee include:

- Evaluate groundwater regulations and permitting processes throughout the state, including the role of state agencies in groundwater management, the development of desired future conditions, and the adoption of groundwater management plans in relation to regional and state water planning.
- Monitor the effects of current and proposed federal initiatives that could impact the implementation of the State Water Plan. Evaluate the policies and investments developed by other states dealing with water issues similar to the State of Texas.
- Monitor ongoing drought conditions and initiatives to promote water conservation through the review of the following: state requirements for the submittal of water conservation plans and annual reporting; the "trigger" for use of drought contingency plans; recommendations by state agencies and the Water Conservation Advisory Council; and progress toward the development of recycled water resources and desalination projects.
- Evaluate the regulatory model for investor-owned water and sewer utilities, including rate case process and timing, consultant fee recovery, overall cost reductions and more effective consumer participation.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

WEAT will be monitoring committee activities related to these interim charges and will advise members on developments.

H204 Texas

Over 600 people attended the H204 Texas Water Event in Fort Worth on November 16-17. This event, sponsored by Sen. Kip Averitt and Rep. Allan Ritter, was designed to raise awareness of the need for a sustainable source of funding for water programs in Texas. The agenda included a number of nationally recognized speakers and several panels of Texas experts discussing the particular issues related to funding Texas' State Water Plan. WEAT was proud to have been a sponsor of this event and to have worked with Sen. Averitt's office to provide access to the Liquid Assets video trailer. The Liquid Assets trailer was shown at the conference and is posted on the H204 Texas website. For additional information, see www.H204Texas.org.

Water Quality Standards and Implementation Procedures

As of this writing, TCEQ is planning to propose the water quality standards rules and implementation procedures on the January 13, 2010, agenda. Proposed rules will be available for review at <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/rules/WEAT> and the coalition of water organizations will continue to follow the proposal for implementation of sub-lethal WET permit limits closely.

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