



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JOE STRAUS
SPEAKER

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CONTACT
JASON EMBRY OR ERIN DALY
SPEAKER'S PRESS OFFICE
512-463-0223

STRAUS MAKES APPOINTMENTS TO FOUR WATER COMMITTEES

AUSTIN -- Texas House Speaker Joe Straus announced Friday his appointments to four water-related committees, signaling the issue's continued importance to the House's work.

The appointees will work to ensure that efforts to improve the state's water supply are properly and effectively implemented. They will also help the full House prepare to address water matters in the next legislative session, which begins in January 2015.

"Water remains a top priority for the Texas House because it remains critical to the Texas economy and our quality of life," said Straus, R-San Antonio. "These Members will play an important role in building consensus around smart, responsible water solutions."

Straus appointed Reps. Allan Ritter of Nederland, Drew Darby of San Angelo and Eddie Lucio III of Brownsville to serve on the newly created State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) Advisory Committee. Rep. Ritter will serve as the advisory committee's Co-Chairman. Statute requires that the advisory committee consist of one Member from the House Appropriations Committee, one from the Natural Resources Committee and one at-large Member.

The Legislature created the SWIFT advisory committee to oversee the Texas Water Development Board's implementation of House Bill 4. Passed by the 83rd Legislature and signed into law by Governor Perry in 2013, House Bill 4 established the SWIFT account to pay for needed water supply and conservation projects across Texas. Last November, Texans voted by a three-to-one margin to dedicate funding for those projects in the Texas Constitution.

The advisory committee will offer recommendations on how projects in the State Water Plan should be prioritized, how to meet the legislation's goals for conservation and assistance for rural areas and agriculture, the management of the SWIFT and any other related issues the committee chooses.

"The Legislature took historic action to address our water needs last year, and Texas voters supported that effort," Straus said. "These Members will help see that this new fund operates in an appropriate and transparent way, just as taxpayers were told it would."

Straus announced appointments and re-appointments to three other committees Friday:

- **Joint Interim Committee to Study Water Desalination:** Reps. Todd Hunter of Corpus Christi (Co-Chair), Ryan Guillen of Rio Grande City, Lyle Larson of San Antonio, Marisa Márquez of El Paso, Tim Kleinschmidt of Lexington, Phil King of Weatherford and Terry Canales of Edinburg. This joint committee is charged with examining the status of seawater and groundwater desalination in Texas, as well as ways that expanded use of desalinated water could help meet Texas' needs.
- **Edwards Aquifer Legislative Oversight Committee:** Reps. Doug Miller of New Braunfels (Co-Chair), Tracy King of Batesville and Lyle Larson of San Antonio. The committee oversees and reviews the activities of the Edwards Aquifer Authority. It also examines the effectiveness of state and local governments in meeting the needs that led to the authority's creation.
- **Environmental Flows Advisory Group:** Reps. Allan Ritter of Nederland (Co-Chair), Doug Miller of New Braunfels and Carol Alvarado of Houston. The advisory group studies the policy implications of balancing demands on the state's water supply with the need for adequate environmental flows for riparian lands, bays and estuaries.

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