

The 85th Texas Legislature: Updates relevant to regional water planning

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Texas Water Development Board

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The following presentation is based upon professional research and analysis within the scope of the Texas Water Development Board's statutory responsibilities and priorities but, unless specifically noted, does not necessarily reflect official Board positions or decisions.



Legislative Update

During the regular session, the Legislature passed three bills relevant to regional water planning:

- SB 347
- HB 2215
- SB 1511

Senate Bill 347

- **Author:** Kirk Watson
- **Content:** Stipulates that each regional water planning group (RWPG), committee, and subcommittee of the RWPG are subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Public Information Act (Government Code, Chapters 551 & 552)
- **Effective:** September 1, 2017

Senate Bill 347

- ***Implementation:***

- Links to the Office of Attorney General's handbooks and training videos have been posted on the TWDB's 5th cycle working documents webpage under Task 10
- Open Meetings Act training requirements apply to voting members of the RWPG (*this is a TWDB interpretation and RWPG members may wish to consult with attorneys from their organizations to analyze the legislation*)

House Bill 2215

- **Author:** Four Price
- **Content:** Synchs the schedules of the State Water Plan and the desired future conditions (DFC) process
 - Groundwater conservation districts to propose DFCs by 5/1/21 and adopt the DFCs by 1/5/22
 - Subsequent DFCs to be adopted before the end of each future five-year cycle

House Bill 2215

- ***Effective:*** Immediately
- ***Implementation:*** Should result in new modeled available groundwater values becoming available earlier in each planning cycle

Note: This was a recommendation in the TWDB Legislative Priorities Report for the 85th Texas Legislative Session

Senate Bill 1511

- **Author:** Charles Perry
- **Content:**
 1. Adds a non-voting member to each RWPG from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
 2. Requires that certain planning group activities be held at a location “readily accessible to the public” within the planning area

Senate Bill 1511

- **Content** (continued):
 3. Directs RWPGs to amend their approved plan to exclude any strategy or project that becomes infeasible, and consider recommending a feasible strategy to address the same need.
 4. Allows RWPGs to implement simplified planning every other cycle if there are no significant changes in water availability, supplies, or demands in the region based upon the RWPG's own initial analysis

Senate Bill 1511

- **Content (continued):**
 5. Directs the TWDB to report on the prioritization and implementation of SWIFT projects in the State Water Plan.
- **Effective:** September 1, 2017
- **Implementation:** Several items for RWPGs to consider; TWDB will begin a rule revision process to address statutory changes

Questions?

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