

# 89<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Update

# Legislative Communications

- Annual Legislative Conference Aug. 27-29
- Monthly County Issues Newsletter
- TAC on the Lege (One More Left)
- Texas County Voice Podcast Episodes
- County Bills tracked, Grants Opportunities on [county.org](https://www.county.org)

# Governor's Priorities Beginning of Session

- Property taxes and affordability
  - \$10 billion in “new property tax relief”
  - All local bond and tax rate elections are moved to November races
  - Requiring two-thirds voter approval for all tax increases
  - Increase the business personal property tax exemption to \$100,000 to support small businesses

# Governor's Priorities

- Water Infrastructure
  - Make the one-time largest investment in water in Texas history, as well as dedicate \$1 billion a year for 10 years to tap into new water supplies and repair existing pipes to save billions of gallons of water each year
- Education
- School Vouchers
- Bail Reform
- Creating a Texas Cyber Command
- Career Training Expansion

# A Few of the Lt. Gov Priority Bills

- Senate Bill 4 – Increasing the Homestead Exemption to \$140,000 (\$150,000 for seniors)
- Senate Bill 7- Increasing Investments in Texas' Water Supply
- Senate Bill 8 – Requiring Local Law Enforcement to Assist the Federal Government's Deportation Efforts
- Senate Bill 16 – Stopping Non-Citizens from Voting
- Senate Bill 19 – Stopping Taxpayer Dollars for Lobbyists

# Good Bills That Passed

## **HB 3010 by Ashby Relating to the establishment of the Rural Infrastructure Disaster Recovery Program**

- The bill would require TDEM to establish and administer a Rural Infrastructure Disaster Recovery Program to benefit eligible political subdivisions.
- The program would have to be designed to provide grants to rural communities located in a disaster area, as declared by the governor, to rebuild and repair critical infrastructure damaged by a disaster.
- Critical infrastructure would be defined as a road, public school, hospital or health care facility, certain water infrastructure and facilities, and certain airport facilities.

# Good Bills That Passed

## **HB 3000 by King. Relating to a grant program to provide financial assistance to qualified ambulance service providers in certain rural counties.**

- Establishes the Rural Ambulance Service Grant Program administered by the comptroller for the stated purpose of ensuring adequate ground ambulance services by providing financial assistance to qualified rural ambulance service providers in counties with populations of 68,750 or less
- \$90 Million appropriated for the next 2 years

# Good Bills That Passed

## **HB 1109 by VanDeaver. Relating to an exemption from certain motor fuel taxes for counties in this state.**

- H.B. 1109 amends the Tax Code to exempt gasoline and diesel fuel sold to a county in Texas for the county's exclusive use from the motor fuel tax.



# Good Bills That Passed

- SB 1173 by Sen. Perry— Increases the bid limit to \$100,000
- HB 18 by Rep. Van Deaver – Rural county health services.
- HB 2529 by Rep. Dean - Includes County Judge in state longevity pay supplement
- SB 868 by Sen. Sparks – Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program

# Additional Bills that Passed

- HB 30 by Rep. Troxclair – Changed calculation for the disaster rate exemption.
- SB 4 – Increasing the Homestead Exemption to \$140,000 (\$150,000 for seniors)
- HB 9- Exempts \$125,000 of appraised value of TPP
- Senate Bill 7- Increasing Investments in Texas' Water Supply

# Bills to Keep an Eye On for Next Session that (Came Close to Passing)

- **SB 2541 by Sen. Bettencourt** – Reduces unused increment rate to a combination of 2-year unused increment rate.
- **HB 19 by Rep. Meyer** – Regulates the issuance and repayment of debt
- **HB 23 by Harris** - Enables a developer to use private third-party reviewers and inspectors for the approval of plats and other development documents. The county must accept the documents even if those determinations conflict with county regulations
- **SB 2183** Expands the dates fireworks may be sold and eliminates commissioners court approval over any dates fireworks can be sold

# Bills to Keep an Eye On for Next Session that (Came Close to Passing)

## **SB 2858 by Sen. Creighton - Preempts county regulation authority.**

- Gives standing to an individual and/or trade associations to sue and initiate AG investigation (no requirement to live in the community)
- Burden of proof on the county to prove compliance with the law.
- During pendency of action county may not receive any state grants or adopt a tax rate above the no-new-revenue-rate (NNR).

# Bills to Keep an Eye On for Next Session that (Came Close to Passing)

**SB 2858 by Sen. Creighton- Preempts county regulation authority.**

- If the AG prevails, the county may not adopt a tax rate over the NNR or receive state grants for 5 years.
- Plaintiff may recover reasonable attorney fees

# Budget Items of Note

- **Rural EMS grant program** - which provides counties with populations of 68,750 or fewer funds to purchase ambulances for EMS providers serving their counties. SB 1 appropriates \$90 million
- **\$330.8 million** to continue funding for the county rural law enforcement grant program (SB 1)
- **\$100 million** for courthouse preservation grant program (HB 500)
- **\$110.2 million** for grants to local governments to support Border Security Operations and for the humane processing of the remains of undocumented migrants (SB 1)

# Budget Items of Note

- \$236 million for disaster assistance grants
- \$235.5 million for Community Mental Health Grants
- \$236.3 million for the volunteer fire department assistance grant program
- \$170.3 million in funding for the Texas Indigent Defense Commission
- \$2.5 billion for water infrastructure and supply projects and grants

# Questions?

Thank you

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