

February 2022

Legislative Report

Elections

Election Day is March 1st, one week from today! You probably haven't helped but notice the massive flood of political advertisements coming across the air waves. In-person early voting began on February 14th and continues until February 25th. The last day for a mail-in ballot to be received is on Election Day by 7:00 p.m. if it is not postmarked or Thursday, March 3rd, if it is postmarked by Election Day. Be sure to include your driver's license or Social Security number, whichever you used when you registered.

The candidates are raising money and campaigning at a break-neck pace. In most cases, the incumbents up and down the ballot appear to be leading their primaries, but there are a few notable exceptions. Some established incumbents who are involved in our issues are in danger of being thrown into a run-off, which is always particularly dangerous for incumbents. As I've mentioned before, the circumstances are even more interesting because of the new districts that were drawn as a result of 2020 census data. As a reminder, in our area, most of the changes occurred in House districts, which are illustrated on page 38 in the following link:

https://data.capitol.texas.gov/dataset/71af633c-21bf-42cf-ad48-4fe95593a897/resource/e8a63cb9-001b-4b1f-a7f8-9106cce80706/download/planh2316_map_report_package.pdf

As I have reported, I am following races all over the state, but I've again included a chart summarizing the races in our region. The senators and representatives who directly represent our counties should ultimately remain the same as they are now, although Ryan Guillen may be having a little bit harder time because his district now includes some more voters further away from the border.

Recently, I particularly enjoyed attending an event for Senator Drew Springer where I had the opportunity to visit with him one-on-one and answer a question he had about permitting for municipal vs. agricultural water use. Senator Springer, of the Wichita Falls area, won a high profile special election last year against the hairdresser woman who got national attention for defying Gov. Abbott's early pandemic shutdown order. As a House member, Senator Springer chaired the Agriculture Committee and is now vice-chair of the Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee. He and Tracy King were the only legislators who showed up in-person

at our TAGD summit last fall. Fortunately, he has no opponents, but is trying to retire his campaign debt from last year.

Administrative Action

The Railroad Commission has been designated as the administrative entity for \$343 million in federal funds to be dedicated to plugging abandoned oil and gas wells. We are currently researching the status of those funds in actually reaching the state and the possibility that the Commission might consider enlisting Brush Country to assist in carrying out that program. Last week, I had a conversation with someone in the Corpus office of the Railroad Commission who works with their orphaned well program. He said they've been told not expect those extra funds, which will enhance the ongoing state program, until next year.

(Have we signed on to the MOU between TDLR and TCEQ on abandoned water wells?)

Interim Charges

There have been no indications that House and Senate interim charges will be released other than after the March 1st primaries. We remain hopeful that these charges in both Chambers will be at least potentially more helpful than harmful to GCDs.

TAGD Legislative Committee

Louie and I attended the TAGD legislative committee meeting that preceded the regularly called TAGD business meeting in Austin on February 8th. Their by-laws say the vice-president is responsible for designating subcommittee topics and membership. So far the VP has specified subcommittees for Sunset Review, since both TWDB and TCEQ are up for review this cycle, and Petition for Rulemaking to consider draft model rules. (This subcommittee is an effort to get ahead of Chmn. Perry's reintroduction of SB 152, which he apparently intends to do.) The remaining subcommittees will be named after the interim charges are released. I will probably ask to participate on all subcommittees, as I've done in the past. Even though I am only eligible to be an associate TAGD member and am officially unable to vote, I can participate in the discussions.

State Legislative Races of Interest

2022

House District	Democrat	Republican
31	Martha Gutierrez	Ryan Guillen (i) Alena Berlanga Michael Monreal
32		Todd Hunter (i)
34	Abel Herrero (i)	James Hernandez Carolyn Vaughn
35	Oscar Longoria (i)	Oscar Rosa
36	Sergio Muñoz (i)	
39	Armando “Mando” Martinez (i)	
40	Terry Canales (i)	
41	Robert “Bobby” Guerra (i)	
42	Richard Peña Raymond (i)	
43		J.M. Lozano (i)
74	Eddie Morales (i)	Katherine Parker
80	Tracy King (i)	
83		Dustin Burrows (i), Austin Jordan
Senate District		
27	Alex Dominguez, Morgan LaMantia Sarah Stapleton-Barrera, Salomon Torres	Adam Hinojosa, Israel Salinas, Raul Torres