



State Representative Lyle Larson
TX HD-122

05.24.2011

Weekly Recap #19

What's new in District 122

We're less than one week from Sine Die, the last day of the 82nd Legislative Session. Though May 12th was the deadline for the House to consider House bills, we may still consider bills that have been passed by the Senate until midnight today, Tuesday May 24th.

Last week, the House finally passed SB 1811, the "fiscal matters" bill. SB 1811 determines how the state will collect revenue to fund its budget for the next two years. Nearly 100 amendments were offered to SB 1811 dealing with a variety of different issues. Because the House ran out of time to consider HB 3188, the EPA push back bill, I introduced an amendment to SB 1811 that would achieve the same goal. The amendment, which would allow Texas to take back control of managing our own environment from the federal government, was adopted by a vote of 76-67.

On Saturday, both the House and the Senate passed one another's redistricting bills. HB 150, the House redistricting bill passed the Senate with a 24-7 vote and SB 31, the Senate redistricting bill passed the House 96-47.

After years of attempts to address ongoing problems created by the Bexar Metropolitan Water District, the Legislature is once again working to provide Bexar Met ratepayers with a solution. This weekend, the House took up SB 341, which would allow Bexar Met ratepayers to vote on whether they want to allow the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) to provide their water and waste water services, or to continue their relationship with Bexar Met. This bill is the result of countless hours of discussions with various stakeholders, legislators and thousands of Bexar Met ratepayers. All of the Bexar County legislative delegation, with the exception of one member, is supportive of this fix to a seemingly never ending problem. We look forward to getting the bill out of conference committee, receiving the Governor's signature and finally the election in November.

Also, this weekend, I presented SB 958, which benefits animal sanctuaries in Texas, specifically Primarily Primates, a sanctuary in District 122. Primarily Primates serves as a

home to wild animals that have been used in lab tests, former zoo animals, abandoned pets and a couple retired congressmen, so we hear. Without organizations such as Primarily Primates, these animals would likely be euthanized. In 2001 the Texas Legislature enacted the Texas Dangerous Wild Animals Act to protect citizens from the threat presented by the increase in dangerous wild animal ownership in Texas. The Act doesn't ban the ownership of dangerous wild animals by Texans; rather, it requires owners to register such animals with a local animal registration agency, pay a fee, and ensure the proper care, treatment and enclosure of such animals. The Legislature has exempted certain categories of animal welfare entities from the Act because such entities are needed to ensure the well being of previously owned dangerous wild animals. Animal sanctuaries, however, are not currently included under these exemptions. An animal sanctuary is a facility where animals are brought to live in a protected situation for the rest of their lives. SB 958 provides a more extensive definition of "wildlife sanctuary" in order to ensure that only legitimate, accredited sanctuaries will be exempt under the Act. The bill also allows organizations accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) and the Zoological Association of America (ZAA) to be exempted under the Act. I am happy to report that SB 958 passed the House of Representatives 143-1 yesterday.

There is a lot of discussion about whether the Governor will call a Special Session to deal with issues that the Legislature doesn't have time to address before Sine Die. With less than a week left, we still have several major items to address before we can break until the next legislative session. Budget conferees for the House and Senate are working around the clock to come to an agreement on a budget for the next biennium that begins in September. If a budget isn't passed by Sine Die, we'll be back in the Capitol this summer. Other issues that are still outstanding include congressional redistricting and some Sunset bills for state agencies. We will also address one of the most contentious budget issues relating to public and higher education this week, which will present one of the biggest challenges of the session for all members. We look forward to providing you with a full recap of the last week of the 82nd Legislative Session next week!

At the Capitol



With Doctor of the Day Horacio Ramirez



With constituents Cindy and Grady Payne

If we may be of assistance to you, please feel free to contact our Capitol office at (512) 463-0646 or lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us. Please continue to let us hear from you!

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyle Larson". The signature is stylized with a large initial "L" and a prominent flourish at the end.