

Texas House of Representatives



Lyle Larson

State Representative - District 122

What's new in District 122

We hope 2012 is shaping up to be a successful and great year for you. Team Larson is off to a busy start. Over the course of the last few weeks, I've shared the details of our emergency state water plan to members of the Texas Seed Trade Association at their convention in Dallas and provided legislative updates to the membership of the Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors of San Antonio, the San Antonio Wildcatters Club, the Dominion Homeowners Association and the Leon Springs Business Association. Please let us know if you'd like us to attend a meeting of an organization you're a part of. We look forward to seeing you around the district!

New TxDOT Projects in District 122

Many residents of Bexar County are familiar with and travel daily the IH-10 corridor from 410 through the county line. As a result of growth in northwest Bexar County and increased use of the two-way frontage roads that traverse the Leon Springs area, traffic accidents have steadily increased throughout this portion of the highway. In an effort to ensure folks can travel this part of IH-10 as safely as possible, TxDOT has developed three different options that will eliminate these two-way frontage roads. Please view the proposal [here](#). As we've traveled the district and presented these options, it appears most people prefer option three. This project uses the traditional funding mechanism and is scheduled for completion by 2015, however TxDOT is working through the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization to expedite the project. For more information on the crash data, cost, and timeline, take a look at [this fact sheet](#). We will keep you apprised of the progress on this particular project.

Redistricting

As the national news continues the discussion about the 2012 presidential race, we in Texas still don't have a clear indication of when we'll have the opportunity to vote and in some cases, who we'll be able to vote for. As you may have heard, last week, a panel of federal judges set May 29 as a tentative date for the primary election. In the meantime, the 9 groups suing the state over the constitutionality of the U.S. Congressional, State Senate and State House maps are continuing negotiations with the Office of the Attorney General to work out a compromise. We will keep you updated as we wait to find out when the election will be held and what maps will be used.

Using weather modification to bolster our water supply

A component of our emergency state water plan - and something that should be included in any program aimed at combating a drought - is weather modification. Earlier this month, we visited the South Texas Weather Modification Association headquarters in Pleasanton, Texas. Weather modification, also known as cloud seeding, is a process that can yield between 20 and 30 percent additional precipitation from a thundercloud. The process, which is extremely inexpensive compared with other strategies like desalination or reservoir building, begins by assessing weather patterns and determining whether certain clouds are likely to expel moisture. Once the experts have determined which clouds are thunderheads, a pilot will fly a small plane over the cloud and release several cartridges of silver iodide, causing a boost in rainfall. Currently, only one sixth of the state's landmass benefits from cloud seeding, while countries including China and India are investing millions of dollars in this mechanism to achieve maximum rainfall. We intend to encourage more groundwater districts and municipalities to use this tool to increase our water supply.

The STAAR Test

Since the decision to implement a new standardized test aimed to measure the academic ability of Texas students, there has been a lot of controversy surrounding the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test. Much of the frustration was caused by the requirement that the test results would count as 15 percent of a student's final grade. Last week, I joined the Chairman of the House Public Education Committee, and several other House members, asking the Texas Education Commissioner to delay the implementation of this requirement. It's clear that before we can make this a requirement, we need to fix the outstanding issues and ensure that all school districts in Texas are implementing these rules uniformly.

Restoring funding for Texas parks

As you may have read in the news, as a result of the drought, wildfires and inadequate funding, Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) is struggling to maintain our state park system. Though the Legislature created a mechanism to fund our park system through a sales tax on all sporting goods sold in the state, the revenue generated from the tax has been sent directly into the state's general fund and only a small fraction of it has been spent on parks. To end this practice and restore truth in budgeting, last session, I authored HB 1628, which would ensure 94 percent of proceeds from the sporting good sales tax would be directed to TPWD and 6 percent to the Texas Historical Commission. The bill was unsuccessful, but we've continued to work throughout the interim on that goal. Over the last several months, we've worked with House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Harvey Hilderbran to develop a strategy to ensure this legislation succeeds next session. Please take a moment to read [this editorial](#) in the San Antonio Express-News about ending diversions from parks funding.

Preparing for the 83rd Legislative Session

As the 83rd Legislative Session approaches, we're working to develop our legislative package and determine what legislation we will pursue. **As we work to ensure your voices are heard in Austin, we hope you'll take a moment to share your views on legislation we intend to propose next year in [this survey](#).** Additionally, if you have other ideas or wish to comment on the proposals included in the survey, please feel free to email me at lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us.

Looking for an opportunity to volunteer? My staff and I visited the San Antonio Food Bank last week to facilitate a protein donation from the Texas Deer Association. While we were there, we toured the facility and spoke to SAFB president Eric Cooper about their needs. Nearly 30 percent of children in south Texas are considered food insecure and over 58,000 people are assisted each week through the SAFB. If increasing your volunteer hours is on your list of new year's resolutions, the Food Bank could use your help. Currently, they need assistance in the kitchen, warehouse and garden. Call 210-337-FOOD or visit safoodbank.org to find out how you can help!

In the news

[Your News Now Austin - Experts stress action to curb state water crisis](#)

[KSAT 12 - San Antonio Food Bank receives big donation from area hunters](#)

[San Antonio Express-News - End the diversion of park funds](#)

[Abilene Reporter-News - Tourism falls off at Texas parks hit hard by drought, wildfires, funding woes](#)

[San Antonio Express-News - Budget crunch has state parks begging](#)

[BBC World Programmes - One Planet the Dry Lands of Texas](#)



With Rep. John Kuempel (R-Seguin) at the South Texas Weather Modification Headquarters

As always, please feel free to contact me if I may ever be of assistance to you by phone at (210) 402-5402 or by email at lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us.

Best,



Lyle Larson