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January 12, 2018

Thank you for subscribing to my newsletter. My newsletter compiles the important information in both House District 127 and in Austin and delivers it straight to your inbox. This week's edition contains information about a new STAAR Assessment project, Plea for Three Updates, a copy of the letter I sent to Governor Abbott explaining the need for immediate action, a copy of the letter I sent to Commissioner Shaw at the TCEQ, and much more.

This week has been a busy week for my staff in the district and in Austin. In my Capitol office, my staff is gearing up for the first meeting of the newly established Public School Finance commission. They are also hard at work answering your calls, letters, and emails. My district staff has been attending various meetings across HD 127, including meetings with Humble ISD staff, the Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce, as well as federal, state, and local officials regarding flood mitigation.

As always, please contact my staff if you have any questions, comments, or concerns about any of these matters. You can contact my staff directly through the information at the bottom of this newsletter.

As a reminder, my office will be closed Monday, January 15, 2018, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Have a great weekend.

Sincerely,

Dan Huberty



Humble ISD Update

TEA Launches STAAR Interim Assessment Project



On Jan. 9, Committee Members presented a report of their work for consideration by the Humble ISD Board of Trustees. In the event that the Board wishes to proceed with a bond election, the Board must call for the election by February 16, 2018, in order to hold the

election on the May 5, 2018 Uniform Election Date.

Humble ISD could finance up to a \$600 million building, repair, and renovation program extended over a six-year period without increasing the debt service tax rate. It is the recommendation of the Humble ISD Administration that the District will not sell bonds until value growth and payments toward existing debt allow the District to do so without raising the debt service tax rate (35 cents per \$100 property valuation).

[Click here to learn more!](#)

Austin Updates

TEA Launches STAAR Interim Assessment Project



Commissioner of Education Mike Morath notified school districts and open-enrollment charter schools that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has launched the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Interim Assessment Pilot.

"The STAAR Interim Assessment Pilot is an optional TEA tool to help educators tailor instructional practice to address students' needs," said Commissioner Morath. "Interim assessment includes items developed with the help of Texas teachers, as well as some former STAAR summative test items. The interim assessment is a tool that districts and educators can use to improve outcomes for students in Texas."

The Spring 2018 Interim Assessments will be a pilot administration working with school districts and charters that elect to participate. Districts may elect to use these interim assessments district-wide. Schools and educators may also choose to administer them locally. All interim assessment items are fully aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the state's curriculum standards used in all public schools.

School systems that choose to participate in the pilot will be asked to provide feedback via a survey. In addition, TEA will conduct on-site visits to get first-hand information from students and educators regarding their experience with the tool. Results of the survey and on-site visits will inform improvements in the Interim Assessments before the full launch in the 2018-2019 school year.

For the initial pilot period (Spring 2018), grades 3 through 8 mathematics and reading interim assessments will be available. For the 2018-2019 school year, Algebra I, English I, and English II, as well as Spanish in grades 3-5, will also be available. Interim assessments will be administered during a pilot testing window from Jan. 29 through March 23.

Commissioner Morath stressed that the interim assessments will not be part of STAAR accountability. TEA will not have access to the student-level data. To read Commissioner Morath's letter to school systems, visit the TEA website at http://tea.texas.gov/taa_letters.aspx.

Hurricane Harvey Recovery Resources

Letter from Chairman Huberty to Gov. Abbott

Governor Abbott:

Today I write to you to implore you to implement the actions outlined in the Plea for Three campaign, originating from the Lake Houston Community. I know that you have received multiple emails, phone calls, and letters from residents of the area asking that you do the same.

This Plea for Three campaign, started by a Long-Term Harvey Recovery Task Force (LTHRTF) comprised of Lake Houston community members, focuses on the recovery needs of the Lake Houston area, following Hurricane Harvey. Specifically, the campaign calls for: remediation of the San Jacinto River, reduction of the water level of Lake Conroe, and local representation on the Board of the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA). As a founding member of the LTHRTF, I am in complete support of all three requests and ask that you take swift action to implement these changes.

Residents of the Lake Houston community have come together to promote the Plea for Three campaign, while external support for the initiative continues to grow. As of today, our office has received over 500 emails regarding the Plea for Three Campaign. Elected Officials in the area are also expressing their support for the campaign. Recently, the City of Humble Mayor Merle Aaron and the city council passed a resolution in support of the initiative. City of Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, Council Member Dave Martin, and Council Member Robert Gallegos have also echoed their endorsement of the cause through various means of communication with statewide elected officials, such as yourself. The chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Lyle Larson, has sent similar letters requesting assistance for the Lake Houston area.

The unprecedented 50 inches of rainfall from Hurricane Harvey coupled with the subsequent release of 79,000 cubic feet per second of water from upstream inundated the Lake Houston area. When the water finally receded, more than 16,000 homes and approximately 3,300 businesses were affected. Our community was unrecognizable.

Now, five months later, many residents and business owners have yet to return to or begin to rebuild their homes and businesses for fear that the flood waters will only inundate them again after another storm. The next hurricane season is less than six months away, and the anxiety to rebuild could have crippling effects of the economy and well-being of House District 127 in the years to come.

Plea for Three is a comprehensive and realistic solution to the problems that my district is currently facing. I request that you take immediate steps to implement the three pillars of the campaign:

REMEDICATION: Immediately remediate Lake Houston and the San Jacinto River. I am requesting full funding to dredge both the lake and river in order to remove the sand, siltation and debris deposits and cease illegal sand mining operations contributing to the loss of capacity in the river and lake.

REDUCTION: Immediately take down the pooling level of Lake Conroe from 201 feet above sea level to 198 feet by pre-releasing water from Lake Conroe in a slow, systematic flow to ensure the dam at Lake Houston can then release this added water to the Gulf of Mexico.

REPRESENTATION: Immediately add three interim board members to the San Jacinto River Authority representing communities downstream impacted by the release of water from Lake Conroe.

Thank you for time and consideration of these important issues. I look forward to working with you to recover the Lake Houston community.

Sincerely,

Dan Huberty

[You can read the letter in its entirety here. Please feel free to print this letter and share it with your friends and neighbors.](#)

Commissioner Shaw:

I am writing today to inquire about the continued implementation of specific legislation I authored during the 82nd Legislative Session. With the sponsorship of Senator Tommy Williams, the bill passed and was implemented by rule by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in June 2012. House Bill 571, which was later codified as Texas Administrative Code 30, Chapter 342, established new definitions for and required all Aggregate Production Operations (APO) to register annually with the TCEQ and pay an annual registration fee. TCEQ then became responsible for annual statewide APO surveys and individual registrant inspections every three years, resulting in financial penalties for non-compliance. Data on the number and location of the registered APOs, the number of inspectors trained in multiple areas related to the investigations, the number of investigations conducted, and the results of the investigations is to be reported annually.

An early implementation update request from my office in October 2012, only one month after the program began, disclosed 87 statewide registrants. Annual reports have shown a steady increase in those numbers with the agency reportedly hosting 928 active statewide registrations in this year's report, dated August 31, 2017. The report identified 137 of those registrants in Region 12 (Houston).

The date of this report caused me concern, as this was only six days after the initial landfall of Hurricane Harvey. As you may be aware, those days were historic for House District 127 and surrounding communities. Although the hurricane had passed, the flood mitigation tactics during that period resulted in more than 79,000 cubic feet of water per second being released from Lake Conroe and into my constituent's homes and businesses. In the early morning hours following the release, residents of HD 127 were being evacuated from their homes by helicopters, boats and military vehicles.

The historic nature of this unprecedented "rain event" can be blamed for much of the flooding in our community; however, many residents in the affected area, including myself, believe that the water released from upstream was fully responsible for the continued widening of the river and lake long after the rain had ceased. The deposits of silt that have formed from decades of legal and illegal sand-mining operations upstream of Lake Houston only exacerbated the flooding in the area. The entities that are participating in this illegal aggregate collection have continued to send sand down the tributaries of the San Jacinto River, which has built-up along the banks and clogged the water's already restricted path to Galveston Bay.

This negligence has caused irreparable damage in HD 127 and could have been prevented through better compliance with the regulations established by HB 571 (82R).

An incident of this magnitude must be prohibited from occurring again. For this reason, I would like to officially request an investigation into the new silt and sand deposits that now line the West and East Forks of the San Jacinto River. This should include information and details on the possible levels of contamination and the feasibility of removal by dredge. This is our community's number one priority for immediate action.

Similarly, I would like to request a new inquiry into the APOs registered to operate along the San Jacinto River prior to Hurricane Harvey and the entities that remained afterward. This should include the last dates of TCEQ inspections, with corresponding results or penalties, and any other information gathered at these locations since the date of the storm.

I believe that this information will be vital in preventing this type of devastation in the future. I look forward to hearing from you. Please contact my office with any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Huberty

[You can read the letter in its entirety here. Please feel free to print this letter and share it with your friends and neighbors.](#)

SEND emails to all suggested state officials

SHARE the campaign with your employees, co-workers, friends, neighbors, and customers

SPREAD the campaign on social media using #PleaFor3LakeHouston #RecoverLakeHouston. See sample tweets/posts, social media pages/groups at RecoverLakeHouston.com

SIGN UP to get updates on the "Recover Lake Houston" movement (your email will not be shared or used for purposes other than Recover Lake Houston updates)

Visit <http://www.lakehouston.org/recoverlakehouston> for more information.



Transitional Sheltering Assistance Deadline Extended - Mar. 12



Harris County Commissioners Court on unanimously voted to work with Montgomery County to seek state funds to study flood control in the San Jacinto River watershed, including Lake Conroe and Lake Houston. Eligible Hurricane Harvey survivors receiving Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA) may receive an extension to stay temporarily in hotels while they look for an alternative place to live.

Disaster survivors with a continuing need for the hotel sheltering program may be extended to Mar. 12, 2018. There will be a mid-term eligibility review on Feb. 20, 2018 where survivors participating in TSA will receive a phone call, email, and/or text message advising them if they have continued eligibility for assistance through a participating hotel.

[To get more information about the program, click here.](#)

Harris County OKs Deal with Montgomery County To Seek Funds for Flood Control Study



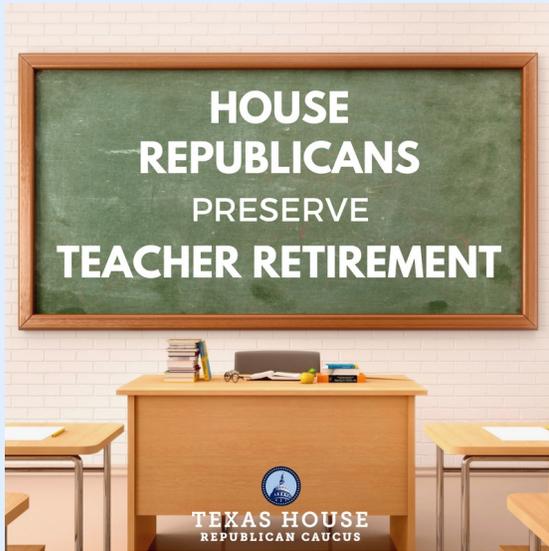
Harris County Commissioners Court on unanimously voted to work with Montgomery County to seek state funds to study flood control in the San Jacinto River watershed, including Lake Conroe and Lake Houston.

The counties would, along with other agencies, apply for a Texas Water Development Board grant. The vote Tuesday comes more than four months after Hurricane Harvey's deluge swelled waters in the Lake Conroe reservoir, forcing torrential releases that flooded hundreds of homes along the river.

[Read more on the Houston Chronicle.](#)

For Your Information

Texas House Republican Caucus Brief - Teacher Retirement



Our Texas teachers are the cornerstone of our education system. With decisive action during the 85th Session, the Texas House continued to provide meaningful health care coverage to those that teach our children.

The bills passed during the 85th sessions include:

Senate Bill 1, the state budget for the 2018-19 biennium, appropriated roughly \$480 million towards the shortfall of TRS-Care

House Bill 3976 - Ashby (85(R)) - Requires a retiree who had coverage under a health benefit plan offered under TRS-Care to pay a monthly contribution,

as determined by the TRS Board of Trustees.

- A Medicare Advantage plan for Medicare eligible participants aged 65 and older is available at a consistent premium cost of \$146.00.
- The bill also requires that no premium will be charged to disability retirees who retired before January 1, 2017, are currently receiving disability retirement benefits, and are not eligible to enroll in Medicare.

Finally, HB 3976 requires TRS to develop a policy to facilitate greater provider access in all areas of the state to ensure that retiree concerns are addressed.

House Bill 21 - Huberty (85(1)) - contains an additional \$212.7 million appropriation. TRS would only be entitled to use these funds for the following purposes:

- To reduce costs for an enrolled adult child with a mental disability or a physical incapacity during the 2018 and 2019 plan years; and
- To decrease the premiums and deductibles that would otherwise be paid by participants in TRS-Care.

By overhauling the TRS-Care system and providing additional funding, House Republicans addressed a significant shortfall facing our state and provided greater health care stability to our Texas retired teachers.

Pink Granite Feature on Molly Spratt, Legislative Director



Pink Granite, a blog dedicated to featuring women in the political sphere, did an interview with Molly Spratt, Chairman Huberty's Legislative Director, about her time in the industry and how she stays organized during session.

[Read more about Molly and her analog system of organization here.](#)

Constituent Resources

Need Assistance?

Our office is always ready to assist you. Call or email us and we will do our best to help. Many State Agencies also have hotlines or citizen assistance offices to assist you. That contact information is available at this link, in alphabetical order:

House District 127 Live Updates

All of the relevant information our office has gathered in regard to response and recovery of Hurricane Harvey is posted immediately to our Facebook page. Be sure to "like" us so that you can have the most up-to-date information.



Upcoming Events

January 2018

See an event you're interested in? Click the links on each date to learn more about the event's details. Under each link, you can find R.S.V.P. information, exact times, locations, and much more.

This color box indicates an event in Austin, Texas.

This color box indicates an event in the House District 127 area.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Law Enforcement Appreciation Day	10 Woodland Hills Expansion - Grand Opening	11 Biz-Com Humble	12	13
14	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day <i>(District and Capitol Offices Closed)</i>	16	17 YEP After Hours Event	18	19 Confederate Heroes Day	20 Family Time Hearts of Gold Gala
	Lake Houston Pachyderm Club - Judicial Forum				LHACC Annual Awards Extravaganza	
21	22	23 Commission on Public School Finance Meeting	24 KARW - CD 2 Forum	25	26	27 HLSR Boots and Buckles Ball
28	29	30	31			

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