



SIERRA CLUB'S 2019 TEXAS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Sierra Club's state legislative priorities for 2019 are divided into eight issue categories: post-Harvey rebuild, clean air, clean energy solutions, safe radioactive waste management, defending citizen and local government participation in environmental decision-making, oversight of oil and gas operations, adequate funding for public lands, wildlife and clean air & clean water, and water conservation and management.

Post-Harvey Rebuild - In the wake of the largest disaster in modern Texas history, ensure equitable and adequate funding for housing, environmental monitoring, disaster relief and planning, including better planning by state agencies for extreme climate realities. Also ensure county government has the tools it needs to adequately inspect and regulate development to avoid future disasters.

Clean Air - Reduce toxic and other air pollutant emissions, including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, from existing industrial plants and electric power plants to meet new and existing Clean Air Act requirements, prevention of air quality deterioration by existing coal-fired power plants, and improved allocations of funding to existing programs like the "Drive A Clean Machine" and the Texas Emissions Reduction Program (TERP) to reduce air emissions from vehicles. The revenues that fund TERP must be extended from 2019 until Texas meets clean air standards to allow our cities to come into compliance with new ozone standards and expanded to make further investments in electric vehicles, storage facilities, and energy efficiency programs.

Clean Energy Solutions - Expand requirements and incentives to achieve greater savings from energy efficiency and increased use of utility-scale and distributed renewable energy sources to address concerns about climate change, assist low-income utility customers, decrease health and environmental risks from fossil fuel generation, meet the true needs for electric power generation, and promote the development of new jobs, economic opportunities, and enhanced energy industry profits and public savings. Defend against legislative efforts that would eliminate or weaken the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard and establish a specific energy savings goal as part of the Energy Efficiency Resource Standard

Safe Management of Radioactive and other "Special" Waste - Ensure that Texas does not add to its current radioactive waste burden by increasing the volume or number of categories of imported radioactive waste, including preventing the importation of high-level radioactive waste to our waste site in Andrews County or other proposed sites. Work with stakeholders to enact safe disposal requirements for used and scrap tires, particularly at existing sites that have led to safety and disease concerns.

Defend Citizen and Local Government Participation in Environmental Decision-Making - Expand and defend the rights of citizens and local governments to be involved in all aspects of



environmental and water rights permitting, oversight, enforcement, and the development of safeguards. In the wake of HB 40, Sierra Club will seek to strengthen citizen and local governments role in oil and gas regulation at the Railroad Commission of Texas, and defend against any attacks that would limit the rights of citizens and local governments to participate in environmental and water rights permitting, enforcement, and development of safeguards, including those related to aggregate and concrete production and sand mining.

Oversight of Oil & Gas Operations - Further enhance the oversight of the exploration, development, and production of oil and natural gas including: better pipeline safety and tar sands safeguards, improved reporting requirements for water used in hydraulic fracturing, and better safeguards and notice requirements for underground injection wells, including prevention of seismic activity; and promote water recycling and “green completions” on new wells to prevent flaring, venting, and methane leaks. Other efforts include better water reporting, better spill regulations, improved leak detection, enhanced enforcement fines and improved tracking of complaints and enforcement actions.

Adequate Funding for Public Lands & Wildlife, Clean Air and Clean Water - Maintain dedicated and adequate sources of funding to sustain progress in improving the state parks system, including acquisition, development, and management of new parklands and protected habitats, providing outdoor recreation opportunities to meet public needs, and exploring options to enhance protection of wildlife diversity in Texas. Ensure continued support for TCEQ air quality programs (TERP & LIRAP) and identify new funding sources to adequately support TCEQ drinking & water quality programs.

Water Conservation and Management

- **Funding** – Support adequate funding for the Texas Water Development Board to: conduct necessary research on groundwater sources, environmental flows, climate impacts on resource planning, and other critical water issues; provide technical assistance to groundwater districts and water utilities to enhance water management and conservation; and implement the state water conservation education program.
- **Groundwater Management** – Enhance the management of groundwater resources on a sustainable basis through recognition of hydrologic connections between groundwater and surface water and ensure that groundwater districts have adequate authority and resources to carry out their responsibilities.
- **Water Planning** – Ensure a regional water planning process that facilitates diverse public participation, prioritizes conservation and drought management, and protects environmental flows
- **Responsible Water Supply Solutions** – Support innovative water supply options that avoid costly and energy-intensive movement of water around the state, minimize environmental impacts, and emphasize efficiency and equity
- **Development of Green Stormwater Infrastructure on a regional scale** - With the constant threat of flood-related disasters in the Gulf Coast region, the creation and funding of a regional-scale “Gulf Coast Resilient Watersheds” Authority would allow for the



development of connected Green Stormwater Infrastructure across jurisdictions as well as increased collaboration between local authorities.

- **Create Water Audit Report Data Validity Pilot Projects** - Fund and implement 3rd-party validated water loss control pilot projects across Texas to determine effectiveness of increased water loss control programs.

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Areas of Focus: environmental flows, regional & state water planning, surface water management, water conservation, water marketing, water quality

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Area of Focus: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department funding, park access, wildlife programs and funding, local park grants

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Areas of Focus: water data management, State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) funding, surface water permitting, water conservation