



Dear GEAA members and friends,

Well, it is about halfway through the 83rd Legislative Session and things are picking up. Today I have good news and bad. The good news first:

[H.B. 105 – Larson](#) will be heard by the [House Ways and Means Committee](#) on Monday, March 4th (at 2:pm or upon adjournment in room E2.014). This bill requires that no less than 50% of funds collected from the proceeds of taxes imposed on the sale, storage, or use of sporting goods are credited to the Parks and Wildlife Department, and that 3% will be dedicated to the Texas Historical Commission. The bill also requires that by 2015 these allocations will increase to 75% and 5% respectively. A big thanks to Representative Lyle Larson and others for filing this bill! Please show your support by contacting the [members of the Ways and Means Committee](#). And, if you can go to the Capitol, stop by and file a card in support of HB 105. You can read GEAA's comments [here](#).

In other good news, it looks like [House Bill 449](#), by Rep. [Dawna Dukes](#), which would prevent Home Owners Associations (HOA's) from restricting xeriscaping and rainwater harvesting, may get a hearing in the [House Natural Resources Committee](#) this coming Tuesday (March 5th). As we said previously, GEAA supports this bill and its companion, [Senate Bill 198](#) by Sen. [Kirk Watson](#). Read more [here](#) and [here](#). If you like this bill, too, please share your support with the [members of the House Natural Resource Committee](#) and the bills sponsors.

Now for the bad news:

Also being heard by the [House Natural Resources Committee](#) at [8:am on Tuesday](#) (room E2.010) is [H.B. 824 - Callegari](#). This bill would triple the volume of sewage spills that require reporting from the current 500 gallons to 1,500 gallons. It would also exempt from reporting a spill that "does not reach waters of the State". We read this to mean that many spills occurring in the Edwards Aquifer Contributing Zone and the recharge and contributing zones of the Trinity aquifers would be exempt from reporting. The bill also gives the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) more latitude in determining which spills are considered harmful to public health.

[GEAA's](#) recently released [studies on sewage spills](#) within the Hill Country would have painted a completely different picture of the condition of our sewage infrastructure had the reporting requirements proposed by HB 824 been in effect. We can't let the Legislature just sweep problems with wastewater infrastructure under the rug.

We need those of you represented by [Trey Martinez Fischer](#), [Tracy King](#), [Lyle Larson](#) or [Doug Miller](#) (and all members of the [House Natural Resources Committee](#)) to let them know what you think of this bill filed by their fellow Committee member, Representative Bill Callegario of Houston. If you are in Austin, please stop by and sign a card opposing this bill. If you are with an organization that appreciates water quality and functioning sewage infrastructure, please send a letter on your letterhead to the members of the House Natural Resources Committee (and copy me at Annalisa@aquiferalliance.org)

Many thanks to all of you who communicate with the legislators on these important issues. As always, stay tuned for more and have a great weekend!

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You can always keep up with interesting water news on [GEAA's Face Book page](#) and, you can mail contributions to support GEAA to PO Box 15618, San Antonio, Texas 78212