

**March 2017**  
**Report from STPRA's Austin Team:**

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Endangered Species Sub-Committees

Committee assignments in the House were announced in mid-February and there were three appointments of special note. Todd Hunter was re-appointed as chair of the powerful Calendars Committee, Rep. J.M. Lozano received the very prestigious appointment as chair of the Higher Education Committee, and Rep. Lyle Larson of San Antonio was appointed as the new chair of Natural Resources, which is of special interest to us because of its jurisdiction over water bills.

Committee hearings are well underway in the Senate and the House is starting to have theirs. Bills in both Houses are still being filed until March 10<sup>th</sup>. Eminent domain bills and funding for fever ticks remain our top areas of interest so far. There have been a number of eminent domain bills filed, but our coalition is primarily focused on House Bills 740-742 by Sen. Kolkhorst. A number of relatively tame groundwater bills have been filed, but an omnibus groundwater regulation bill is expected from Chairman Perry in the Senate, soon.

We would like to thank members Gail and Bruce Hoffman, Joe Maley, Lonnie Stewart, Thaddius Watson and Buffie Campbell for making the trip to Austin at the end of February to represent STPRA at the Capitol. Besides visiting with some Legislators at a reception co-hosted by TWA and going to some legislative offices, we had a chance to visit in-depth with Animal Health Commission and Parks and Wildlife officials about their program budget needs. We will likely enlist some of you to come and testify before the session is over!