

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

Robert Howard, Organizational Consultant  
Joey Park, Governmental Affairs Consultant  
Eric Opiela, Attorney; STPRA Board Member and Chair of Eminent Domain and  
Endangered Species Sub-Committees

Bills are coming in fast and furiously at the Capitol and will continue to do so until the filing deadline on March 10th. While a long list of bills of interest is growing steadily, we are waiting for highly anticipated bills for eminent domain reform and groundwater ownership and regulation. Budget concerns are ever-present, given the oil downturn. Most agencies will take a significant hit and we are particularly concerned about funding for the Animal Health Commission for fever tick control. Our governmental affairs consultant, Joey Park, is compiling a bill tracking list that we will be linking on our website. Watch the daily news updates for information about the roll-out of this system.

Committee assignments in the Senate have been announced and our South Texas delegation has fared well. Sen. Hinojosa is on Finance and Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs, Sen. Lucio is on Veterans Affairs and Border Security, and Sen. Zaffirini is on State Affairs and is vice-chair of Natural Resources and Economic Development, while Senator Kolkhorst chairs Administration and also sits on the water panel. House assignments are expected any day.

Of immediate interest, Joey and board members Frank Armstrong and Eric Opiela are reviewing property tax relief bills. We will inform members about these bills as they move forward so that you can register your support at the appropriate time.

## **STPRA Day at the Capitol February 20th and 21st!**

We are partnering with the Texas Wildlife Association to make our interests known at the Capitol on February 20th and 21st. We need you, as a member of STPRA, to help us make our presence felt with our South Texas legislative delegation. At 4 p.m. on the 20th, we will meet to get marching orders and then have a reception for legislators at 5 p.m. On the 21st at 8 a.m., we will begin our meetings at the Capitol. We will need you in Austin the afternoon of the 20th to participate in this event. Please see the website for accommodation information. Come help us make a difference and have fun in the process!