



Austin Landline Report August 2018

The temperature and political campaigns for the general election have continued to heat up across the state. There are several competitive Congressional and State House races and one in the Texas Senate. The U.S. Senate race between Ted Cruz and Beto O'Rourke still favors Senator Cruz, but recent polls have prompted one of the country's most accurate analysis groups to change its status from "Strong Republican" to "Leaning Republican". The only Texas state-wide office holder with any possible jeopardy at this point appears to be Attorney General Ken Paxton, who is under criminal legal allegations. Things should shape up more clearly by the beginning of next month.

Our Eminent Domain Sub-Committee and staff continue to work toward finding the best strategy for promoting legislative reform in the next session. Recent reports have strongly indicated that the pressure to build more gas lines will only increase due to a shortage of capacity to pipe the excess gas that is co-produced. We are meeting with legislative leaders and communicating with our traditional allies to determine how best to proceed.

As Susan discussed in her report, the use of fever tick spray boxes became an unexpected issue because of the Texas Department of Agriculture Commissioner's determination that the pesticide's use was "off-label" and the proper regulatory oversight protocol was not being followed. We participated in meetings yesterday led by the cattle industry that resulted in the Commissioner's allowance of a 45-day grace period in the use of spray boxes until a permanent solution for pesticide label compliance is found, as long as the regulatory oversight is followed.

The Texas Water Development Board should be releasing its preliminary statewide flood assessment report any day soon for a period of public comment. We will keep you informed of that release so that everyone will have a chance to participate.