

GROUNDWATER ISSUES SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
RECORD OF MEETING
Second Quarter Meeting, Fiscal Year 2026

Meeting Date: December 3, 2025
Meeting No.: 44

Place: videoconference
Room: N/A

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MEETING ATTENDANCE

Subcommittee Members

Kathy McCormack (Co-Chair)
Chris Heiligenstein (Co-Chair)
Rebecca Storms
Chris Hooyboer
Omar Valdez
David Villarreal
T.J. Helton

David Van Dresar
Justin Thompson

Linzy Foster
Carly Rotzler
Ken Rainwater

Agency Staff

Stanley Aniagu

Katie Brice
Alan Cherepon
Stephanie Escobar
Adam Foster
Dan Hannah
James Harcourt
April Hoh
Cindy Hooper
Peggy Hunka
James LaManna
Pecos McDonald
Michael Parr
James-Eric Simon
Scott Underwood
Phillip Valladolid
Scout Vanderwal
Jazmin Villeda

Interested Parties

Lorrie Council
April Davis
Reyna Loosmore

Diana Nichols

Affiliation

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC)
Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)
Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR)
Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)
Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD)
Bureau of Economic Geology of The University of Texas at Austin (UTBEG)
United States Geological Survey (USGS)
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)
Texas Tech University (TTU)

Affiliation

TCEQ

Program

Toxicology, Risk Assessment, and Research Division

TCEQ

Water Availability Division

TCEQ

Water Availability Division

TCEQ

Water Availability Division

TAGD

TCEQ

Radioactive Materials Division

RRC

TCEQ

Water Availability Division

TCEQ

Water Availability Division

TCEQ

Water Availability Division

TCEQ

Water Supply Division

TDLR

TCEQ

Environmental Law Division

TCEQ

Water Availability Division

TCEQ

Water Availability Division

TWDB

DSHS

TDLR

Affiliation

Ground Water Protection Council (GWPC)

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) Institute for Homeland Security
Kelly Hart & Hallman, LLP

MEETING HANDOUTS

1. Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Groundwater Issues (GWI) Subcommittee Meeting Agenda, December 3, 2025
2. TGPC GWI Subcommittee Meeting Record, September 10, 2025
3. TGPC Agricultural Chemicals (AgChem) Task Force (TF) Status Report, December 3, 2025
4. Proposed FY26 Pesticide Monitoring Plan
5. TGPC Publications Status Report, December 3, 2025
6. USGS Pesticide Report, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/publication/sir20255081/full>
7. Microplastics webinar proceedings, <https://egle.idloom.events/2025-Microplastics-Summit/pages/Event-Proceedings>
8. City of Austin Aquifer Storage and Recovery project news article, <https://www.kxan.com/news/local/austin/austin-withdraws-plans-to-store-water-in-aquifer-beneath-bastrop-county/>
9. Abandoned Water Well news article, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/animal-news/maine-wardens-rescue-moose-trapped-hours-abandoned-well-rcna233336>
10. P-13 Wells journal article, <https://twj-ojs-tdl.tdl.org/twj/article/view/7212/6522>
11. CCS Class VI Wells news article, <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/energy/article/carbon-capture-storage-primacy-texas-epa-trump-oil-21169266.php>
12. State Agency Notification of Groundwater Contamination
13. Texas Water Code (TWC) Sections 26.401 – 408 markup

MEETING RECORD OF DECEMBER 3, 2025

1. PRE-MEETING REMINDERS

Before the meeting started, Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) provided the attendees with some tips that would facilitate a productive videoconference.

2. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The TGPC approves all Subcommittee products and designated TGPC members attending this Subcommittee meeting participated as an employee or representative of their agency or organization, not as a designated TGPC member. Therefore, this Subcommittee meeting was not subject to the Open Meetings Act and it was held 100% virtually. The public was also able to attend this meeting via videoconference or teleconference at no cost.

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ), Co-Chair of the GWI Subcommittee, called the meeting to order at approximately 9:32 AM CST and then called the roll of GWI Subcommittee members. The representatives from Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension) were not present at the meeting.

3. STATUS REPORTS

Agricultural Chemicals Task Force

Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) reported on the Agricultural Chemicals Task Force:

- The proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Pesticide Monitoring Plan would continue Cooperative Monitoring with TWDB. Additionally, pesticide groundwater monitoring data from USGS and other TCEQ monitoring programs would be provided to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as available.
- An updated TCEQ Interagency Pesticide Database (IPD) report was still being prepared to replace the previous 2008 report. Numerous potential errors were identified with the USGS data between 2019 and 2025, and this was being investigated and corrected, as needed.
- On December 9 – 10, 2025, Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) would attend and staff a tabletop display at the annual Texas Plant Protection Association Conference in Bryan, Texas. The TGPC exhibit booth included Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) grant-related information. This year's conference focused on water resources and agriculture.
- The 2026 U.S. EPA/States/Tribes FIFRA Spring grant meeting would be hosted by New Mexico.

TGPC Publications

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) reported on the following TGPC publications:

- *Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report – 2025* (“*Joint Report*”, TCEQ publication SFR-56-25)
 - Work on the 2025 *Joint Report* would begin in January 2026.

- *Activities and Recommendations of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee: Report to the 90th Legislature* (“Legislative Report”, SFR-47/26)
 - The TGPC Legislative Report Subcommittee would be reactivated during the TGPC meeting in January 2026 in order to prepare the report.

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) also reported on the following groundwater-related TCEQ publications:

- *Groundwater Assessment* (TCEQ publication AS-465/26) for the 2026 *Texas Integrated Report of Surface Water Quality for Clean Water Act Sections 305(b) and 303(d)* (“Texas Integrated Report”)
 - The 2026 *Groundwater Assessment* was being prepared and would be completed by April 2026.
 - The published report would be provided to TCEQ’s Water Quality Planning Division for inclusion in the 2026 *Texas Integrated Report*.
- *Priority Groundwater Management Areas and Groundwater Conservation Districts, Report to the 90th Texas Legislature* (“PGMA/GCD Legislative Report”, SFR-53/26)
 - Work on the *PGMA/GCD Legislative Report* will be initiated in summer of 2026.

4. SET FUTURE MEETING DATE

The next TGPC GWI Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 9:30 AM CST and it was planned as a videoconference.

5. DISCUSS CURRENT GROUNDWATER ISSUES

Oil and Gas Produced Water

David Villarreal (TDA) reported that the Texas Produced Water Consortium (TxPWC, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/research/tx-water-consortium/>) had held stakeholder meetings during the previous quarter, and that they had recently established several breakout groups. Omar Valdez (DSHS) asked if public health was discussed at these meetings, and David Villarreal (TDA) indicated that this had not been discussed in the past, but it might be a discussion topic in one of the new breakout groups. Carly Rotzler (TPWD) added that TTU had received \$15M from the TxPWC to investigate the holistic impacts of oil and gas produced water, including ecosystem studies of various sites.

Adam Foster (TAGD) left at approximately 10:00 AM CST and was absent for the remainder of the meeting. Ken Rainwater (TTU) joined at approximately 10:02 AM CST and was present for the remainder of the meeting.

Emerging Chemical and Biological Contaminants

A recently published USGS report found that pesticide totals in groundwater were declining around the United States (<https://pubs.usgs.gov/publication/sir20255081/full>). The study focused on concentration changes in 22 pesticides that were analyzed from 1993 to 2023. The percentage of wells that had groundwater pesticide concentrations in the moderate range decreased from 7 percent in the first two decades to 1 percent to 2 percent most recently.

Moderate concentrations were defined as those greater than 10 percent of the human health benchmark (HHB) but less than or equal to the HHB. Atrazine, deethylatrazine, alachlor, prometon, and simazine were five pesticides detected at this level. In spite of this encouraging data, the report concluded that continued monitoring and evaluation of changes in pesticide concentrations in groundwater was important for the protection of human health because about 13% of the U.S. population obtains its drinking water from public or private wells and negative human-health impacts can potentially occur from consuming drinking water with contaminant concentrations below HHBs.

On October 22, 2025, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy sponsored their inaugural Great Lakes Microplastics Summit. This free webinar was focused on surface water, and some key points were that stormwater was the main contributor of microplastics (MPs) to surface water, MPs may be moving into biosolids, more MPs are created in plastic water bottles by mechanical means (and shaking them creates more than squeezing them) than by exposure to high temperatures or ultraviolet light, the most toxic MP is polyvinyl chloride (PVC) because it has a lot of chemical additives, tire fragments are widespread in the environment, and more MPs have been found in an aluminum can of beer (700) than a plastic water bottle (30). However, one of the speakers confirmed what was reported at the National Ground Water Association (NGWA) webinar on microplastics and nanoplastics (MNPs) in groundwater on July 10, 2025 – that generally low levels of MNPs have been found in groundwater so far. All session recordings and some of the presentation files are available at <https://egle.idloom.events/2025-Microplastics-Summit/pages/Event-Proceedings>.

David Villarreal (TDA) shared that there had been a recent National Academy of Sciences (NAS) webinar regarding “The Potential Hazards to Human Health and The Environment from Microplastics and the Complexity of Assessing Risks” (<https://www.nationalacademies.org/projects/DELS-BLS-24-08/event/44826>).

Stanley Aniagu (TCEQ) reported that the Interstate Technology & Regulatory Council (ITRC) had been offering several training webinars (e.g., (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC), MPs, and green chemistry), with more to come in 2026 (<https://itrcweb.org/online-training/>).

David Villarreal (TDA) reported that the Texas Rapid Response Team had been working with cyclospora issues because this microscopic parasite is persistent in the environment. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was performing a study and had found that cyclospora could be detected before and after wastewater treatment. The U.S. FDA subject matter expert on this topic had offered to speak to the TGPC about their research.

Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR)

Following-up on an item from the last meeting, Austin Water, the City of Austin’s water utility, had withdrawn its plans for an ASR project in the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer in Bastrop County (<https://www.kxan.com/news/local/austin/austin-withdraws-plans-to-store-water-in-aquifer-beneath-bastrop-county/>). The reasons for the local opposition included potentially decreased groundwater quantity and quality.

Abandoned Water Wells

On September 17, 2025, game wardens took five hours to pull a bull moose out of a nine-foot-deep abandoned water well in Pembroke, Maine (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/animal-news/maine-wardens-rescue-moose-trapped-hours-abandoned-well-rcna233336>).

The *Texas Water Journal* recently published an article about P-13 wells (<https://twj-ojs-tdl.tdl.org/twj/article/view/7212/6522>). The Texas Natural Resources Code (§89.011, <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/NR/htm/NR.89.htm#89.011>) and RRC regulations (§3.14(a)(4), [https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?\\$locale=en_US&interface=VIEW_TAC_SUMMARY&queryAsDate=11%2F07%2F2025&recordId=223566](https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?$locale=en_US&interface=VIEW_TAC_SUMMARY&queryAsDate=11%2F07%2F2025&recordId=223566)) allow a landowner and the operator of an abandoned oil or gas well to file a Form P-13 application (<https://www.rrc.texas.gov/media/lcalkal/finalp-13-92104.pdf>) and convert it into a water well for freshwater production – the operator plugs the well up to the base of the usable quality water and then transfers ownership and liability for it to the landowner. The landowner then hires a licensed water well driller to complete the water well installation process. This paper discussed the regulatory jurisdiction of legacy P-13 wells with failed base plugs.

David Van Dresar (TAGD) noted that P-13 wells were a growing issue in his area of the state and plug failure was a concern. James Harcourt (RRC) indicated that, although there may be concerns with some legacy P-13 wells, the protection requirements and standards were now much more robust, and he would be happy to discuss any questions about these wells.

Chris Hooyboer (TDLR) added that they would be increasing their enforcement efforts and updating their rules regarding abandoned water wells.

Groundwater Quality Monitoring

Rebecca Storms (TWDB) reported that:

- The FY 2026 water quality monitoring season was in planning mode, and they would target four major aquifers to sample in the spring and summer of 2026: the Carrizo-Wilcox, Hueco-Mesilla Bolson, Pecos Valley, and Seymour Aquifers. They would also sample a few minor aquifers located near these major aquifers.
- Planning for the FY 2026 springs monitoring program would begin soon.
- They were in discussions with TCEQ about obtaining Public Water System (PWS) raw groundwater quality data to upload into their Groundwater Database.
- They had a vacancy for a groundwater monitoring field position.

Brackish Groundwater

Rebecca Storms (TWDB) reported that:

- Their Brackish Resources Aquifer Characterization System (BRACS) team had re-started the Dockum Aquifer study which was put on hold six years ago.
- The Woodbine Aquifer brackish groundwater study was in publication and should be available in early 2026.

- There were four brackish groundwater production zones proposed for the southern portion of the Trinity Aquifer (i.e., the Hill Country Trinity aquifer) and a stakeholder input meeting would be scheduled for early 2026.

Evapotranspiration Networks

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Others

On November 12, 2025, the U.S. EPA approved RRC's application to regulate carbon capture and storage (CCS) Class VI wells

(<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/energy/article/carbon-capture-storage-primacy-texas-epa-trump-oil-21169266.php>).

Rebecca Storms (TWDB) reported that they had been allocated \$7.5M for FY 2026 – 2027 (Senate Bill 1, Article IX, Section 17.25) for grants to Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCDs) to conduct projects and programs for groundwater research, science, and data collection that benefit local groundwater management and planning. TWDB was still organizing the logistics for this effort, with a target date to open applications in mid-January 2026.

6. BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Groundwater Contamination Notice Coordination – State Agency Contact Reminder

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) reviewed the state agency reporting requirements for notification of groundwater contamination. When a state agency first documents groundwater contamination, it must notify TCEQ within 30 days and provide information so that TCEQ's Impact Evaluation Team (IET) can review the case and notify those potentially affected. In the 89th Texas Legislature's Regular Session (2025), Senate Bill (SB) 1663

(<https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/html/SB01663F.HTM>) added options for TCEQ to deliver the required notice, and it also added a new requirement for notice to be provided to each residential address within one mile of the contamination site. State agencies are required to identify private water wells that may be impacted by confirmed groundwater contamination, and they must also provide each residential address within one mile of the contamination site. The IET's current state agency contact was Cindy Hooper (TCEQ, cindy.hooper@tceq.texas.gov, 512-239-4271).

Chris Heiligenstein (RRC) indicated that they would need additional resources to meet the new reporting requirements for residential addresses.

James Harcourt (RRC) left at approximately 10:50 AM CST and was absent for the remainder of the meeting.

Amendments to 31 TAC Chapter 601, Groundwater Contamination Report – Discuss Proposal for Publication

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) led a discussion of the TGPC’s upcoming rulemaking in response to action taken during the regular legislative session earlier in 2025. This preview of the proposed amendments to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 31, Part 18, Chapter 601 (https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?chapter=601&interface=VIEW_TAC&part=18&title=31) were in preparation for the TGPC taking official action on the full rule Proposal at their next quarterly meeting. SB 2124 (<https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/html/SB02124F.HTM>) moved the deadline for publishing the TGPC’s annual *Joint Report* from April to June – because “April” was also listed in the TGPC’s rules, the TGPC’s rules needed to be updated. While the rules were open, the TGPC would also propose streamlining two sub-sections and making some non-substantive grammatical and formatting changes for clarity.

David Van Dresar (TAGD) noted that it can be challenging to provide information to everyone in an area at the same time, but some options that could be explored included using multiple methods and reverse telephone calls (similar to public safety and emergency management notifications). Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) indicated that they planned to mail a postcard or letter to every affected resident.

Omar Valdez (DSHS) said that he did not agree with removing “in writing” in the proposed amendment to 31 TAC 601.10; however, if “in writing” was not removed, he suggested that the wording be changed to “in writing, when practicable”.

Rebecca Storms (TWDB) asked if there would be a requirement to document the method of how each residence was notified, and Peggy Hunka (TCEQ) indicated that they planned on tracking this information.

Justin Thompson (UTBEG) left at approximately 10:55 AM CST, David Villarreal (TDA) left at approximately 11:00 AM CST, and they were absent for the remainder of the meeting.

Discussion of White Papers Under Development

There was no discussion of white papers at the meeting.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Linzy Foster (USGS) announced their upcoming webinar on December 5, 2026, regarding “Fertilizer or foe? Land-applied waste reuse materials and farm-to-fork potential contaminant pathways” (<https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/ecosystems/news/fertilizer-or-foe-land-applied-waste-reuse-materials-and-farm-fork#publications>).

Lorrie Council (GWPC) announced that they would hosting their annual Underground Injection Control (UIC) Conference in Ft. Worth on February 10-12, 2026, and it would include half a day

of presentations regarding Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) and MAR (<https://www.gwpc.org/event/2026-uic-conference/>).

David Villarreal (TDA) announced the 8th Annual Texas Plastic Pollution Symposium that was scheduled in Galveston on March 25, 2026 (<https://texasplasticpollutionsymposium.com/>).

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the meeting.

9. ADJOURN

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:07 AM CST.