



# Legislative UPDATE

September 25, 2020  
Number 38

## **Act Soon:** **Choose Your City's 2020 TML Business Meeting Delegate!**

At the 2020 TML Annual Conference, the membership will consider [several resolutions](#) related to legislative issues and the League's constitution. Three of this year's resolutions, if passed, will form the basis of TML's 2021-2022 Legislative Program, and two relate to amending the [TML Constitution](#) to accurately reflect affiliate organization names. To learn more about the League's policy development process, check out the introductory section of the resolutions packet linked above.

The resolutions will go directly to the membership at the [TML Business Meeting](#), which will meet using Zoom technology on October 14, 2020, at 3:30 p.m.

Each city is entitled to one delegate at the business meeting. Cities are encouraged to sign up their delegate early [here](#). The delegate isn't required to have any special expertise, and an elected official representative is encouraged but not required. The delegate must sign up electronically prior to 5:00 p.m. on October 9, 2020, for planning purposes.

## **Legislative Committees Request Information** **on Interim Charges**

Due to the ongoing pandemic and the uncertainty as to scheduling interim hearings, several legislative committees have issued notices of formal “requests for information” (“RFIs”) to which the public, including cities, may respond. The following is a non-exhaustive list of RFIs on city-relevant interim charges, sorted by the deadline for submitting comments. Interested city officials may follow the links associated with each committee for more details about the procedure to submit comments:

### **September 25, 2020 – [House Natural Resources Committee](#)**

- **Interim Charge 1:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
  - HJR 4, SB 7, and SB 8, which relate to statewide and regional flood planning and mitigation. Monitor the progress of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and other entities to provide for the planning, development, and financing of drainage, flood mitigation, and flood control projects statewide to strengthen the state's infrastructure and resiliency to future floods.
  - HB 722, which relates to the development of brackish groundwater. Monitor the designation of Brackish Groundwater Production Zones by the TWDB and the adoption of rules by groundwater conservation districts for the production of brackish groundwater from those Zones.
  - HB 807, which relates to the state and regional water planning process. Monitor the appointment of the Interregional Planning Council by the TWDB and the Council's progress toward increasing coordination among Regional Water Planning Groups.
- **Interim Charge 2:** Study the efforts of the TCEQ, the TWDB, and the Public Utility Commission of Texas to incentivize, promote, and preserve regional projects to meet water supply needs and encourage public and private investment in water infrastructure. Identify impediments or threats to regionalization with special emphasis on:
  - Prioritization in planning and implementing the State Water Plan, Regional Water Plan, and other recommended water supply projects;
  - Barriers to private investment and the development of public-private partnerships to implement needed water supply projects, including the retail water and wastewater industry, to address the state's growth challenges;
  - Public water and wastewater systems that are unable to meet federal and state standards due to inadequate operational capacity and factors that prevent such

systems from being integrated into larger systems and processes that more easily facilitate the sale, transfer, or merger of systems;

- State agency authority to regulate regional water supply pricing.
- The committee also seeks written submissions on the following topics:
  - Emerging issues in groundwater and surface water interaction, in particular in areas of increasing competition for scarce resources.
  - The status of water markets in Texas and the potential benefits of and challenges to expanded markets for water.

#### **October 30, 2020** – [House Licensing and Administrative Procedures Committee](#)

- **Interim Charge 1:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
  - HB 892, which relates to county regulation of game rooms. Monitor the status of counties statewide who have chosen to regulate game rooms and implement their own regulatory structure to combat illegal gambling activity via registration and permitting requirements, fees, disclosure of ownership, inspection schemes, and civil and criminal penalties.
  - HB 1545, which is the sunset legislation for the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. Monitor the implementation of the legislation and the agency's progress in the consolidation, repeal, and creation of certain licenses and permits and the adoption of new fees.

#### **November 13, 2020** – [House Ways and Means Committee](#)

- **Interim Charge 1.1:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
  - S.B. 2, which is the Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019. Monitor the implementation of the legislation, including a review of the tax rates adopted by taxing units in 2019 and 2020, the appraisal review board survey system, and progress in onboarding the tax rate notices and websites. Make recommendations for modifications as necessary and appropriate.

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates**

The Texas Municipal League is open for business. The building is closed to all but essential personnel and most staff is working remotely, but the League remains open for business and is fully ready to serve. Cities are encouraged to call or email for legal assistance, help with ordinances, or for general advice or assistance. Let us know how we can assist you and your city.

Call TML staff at 512-231-7400, or email Scott Houston for legal assistance at [SHouston@tml.org](mailto:SHouston@tml.org); Rachael Pitts for membership support at [RPitts@tml.org](mailto:RPitts@tml.org); and the training team for questions about conferences and workshops at [training@tml.org](mailto:training@tml.org).

The League has prepared a coronavirus clearinghouse [web page](#) to keep cities updated. In addition, everyone who receives the *Legislative Update* should receive a daily email update each afternoon with information on new developments. The daily email updates will be our primary means of communication during the pandemic. Those emails are being archived [chronologically](#) as well as by [subject matter](#).

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