

2020 – Legislative Report – Sunset Commission- Late May

BOB TURNER RURAL ISSUES CONSULTING

Voss, Texas

cell text 325 669 1717

Austin, Texas

Forecasting future – 2020 – 2021 - Legislative activities and functions is proving to be extremely difficult. As I have advised all of you to do – I went to Texas Legislature On-Line - on the internet. As a result of checking for future Committee hearings- this is what I found on the House Home pages. Under Upcoming meetings - this was the only directive - - “No meetings have been scheduled”.

On the Senate Home Pages there was very little difference. Under upcoming meetings there was a Senate Finance Public Hearing posted for June 2nd - -but found the following notice - - (cancelled/see notice) - which dealt with large public meetings as related to coronavirus. The only other Senate hearing scheduled was Senate Health and Human Services - - scheduled for September 9th, 2020.

You are all familiar with the well-known and publicized issues facing the new Legislature – such as the Texas state budget for next 2-year period. This next session the legislature will also be responsible for the re-districting of all elected voting district boundaries. Drawing the new district maps – as based on 2020 census – will become a major challenge.

One of the most pressing issues – and possibly least understood – in each legislative session – deals with Texas Sunset Commission reviews. These agency reviews are conducted on a revolving cycle. Every state agency is evaluated to determine their effectiveness - need for existence – and satisfactory operation. The current schedule includes 2019 – 2020 and 2021. The following list of state agencies who are

subject to Sunset Review looks terribly long – and it is. However – keep in mind that the Sunset Review Commission currently has 131 agencies scheduled during the next twelve year period.

If all goes well when each agency is reviewed – and no glaring problems exist – the period granted can be as long as 12 years before the agency is again reviewed. Normally – less frequency is allowed to each agency. The agencies scheduled for Sunset Review during this legislative session will be: Texas Dept of Agriculture – - Anatomical Board of the State of Texas – - Texas Animal Health Commission – -Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation – -Brazos River Authority – Credit Union Department – - Early Childhood Health and Nutrition Interagency Council – Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office – Texas Commission on Fire Protection – - Holocaust and Genocide Commission of Texas - - Texas Commission on Jail Standards – -Texas Commission on Law Enforcement – Texas Licensing and Regulation – -Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept – -Prepaid Higher Education Tuition Board – -Prescribed Burn Board – -Racing Commission – -San Jacinto River Authority - - State/Federal Relations Office – - Teacher Retirement System of Texas and the Texas Veterinary Medical Examiners Board. Needless to say – the state constitution guarantees all citizens input opportunity and a transparent picture of how each of these agencies is rated and evaluated. Now comes one of the problems – how do you cram a state hearing room full of concerned citizens -affected agency personnel - legislators and state leaders – with our current needs of distancing and protection concerns with the coronavirus issue still running at it's current rate.

I cannot stress the importance of an accurate census count enough. Remember - our future federal funding allocations will be based on an accurate population count. PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT – HOWEVER – IS THE FACT THAT OUR FUTURE VOTING DISTRICTS = FROM COUNTY

COMMISSIONER – TO U. S. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS WILL BE BASED
ON THE ACCURACY OF THE FEDERAL CENSUS.