

# **T E X A S**

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# **GROUNDWATER PROTECTION**

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# **C O M M I T T E E**



## **MEMBER AGENCIES**

**Texas Commission on Environmental Quality**

**Texas Water Development Board**

**Railroad Commission of Texas**

**Texas Department of State Health Services**

**Texas Department of Agriculture**

**Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board**

**Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts**

**Texas A&M AgriLife Research**

**Bureau of Economic Geology of  
The University of Texas at Austin**

**Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation**

# T E X A S GROUNDWATER PROTECTION C O M M I T T E E

**C**reated by the 70th Legislature in 1989 (House Bill 1458), the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC or “Committee”) is bridging the gap between state groundwater programs. Composed of representatives from the state agencies and organizations listed on the cover, the Committee strives to identify areas where new or existing groundwater programs could be enhanced, as well as improve coordination among agencies and organizations involved in groundwater-related activities.

As part of its legislative mandate, the Committee helps facilitate state agencies’ implementation of the state’s groundwater protection policy. This policy establishes non-degradation of the state’s groundwater as the goal for all state programs. It recognizes the variability of the state’s aquifers, the importance of maintaining water quality for existing and potential uses, the protection of the environment, and the maintenance and enhancement of the state’s long-term economic health.

The policy states that pollutant discharges, waste disposal, and other regulated activities be conducted in a manner that will maintain present uses and not impair potential uses of groundwater or pose a public health hazard. The policy recognizes the use of the best professional judgment by the responsible state agencies in attaining these goals.

The Executive Director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is the Chairman of the Committee, and TCEQ staff provide primary administrative and technical support for the Committee.

## Committee Responsibilities

### Coordinates groundwater protection activities of the agencies represented on the Committee

- **Meetings.** The Committee and most Subcommittees meet quarterly; meeting times and agendas are posted on the Secretary of State’s web site ([www.sos.state.tx.us](http://www.sos.state.tx.us)) and on the Committee’s web site. The Committee also maintains a mailing list of interested parties for meeting notification. Written records of all Committee and Subcommittee meetings are available on its web site.

### Develops and updates a comprehensive groundwater protection strategy for the state

- **Texas Groundwater Protection Strategy,** TCEQ publication AS-188 (“*Strategy*”), contains guidelines for the prevention of groundwater contamination and the conservation of groundwater. In addition to documenting how the current regulatory, outreach, and research programs work to protect groundwater, the *Strategy* identifies gaps in groundwater protection program implementation or coordination and a plan to address them.

### Studies and recommends to the Legislature groundwater protection programs for each area in which groundwater is not protected by current regulation

- The ***Activities and Recommendations of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee,*** TCEQ publication SFR-047 (“*Legislative Report*”), describes the TGPC’s activities for the two preceding years and provides recommendations to improve groundwater protection for legislative consideration.

### Publishes a report documenting the status of groundwater contamination cases and groundwater monitoring programs

- The ***Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report,*** TCEQ publication SFR-056 (“*Joint Report*”), describes the current

status of groundwater monitoring activities conducted or required by each member of the TGPC to assure regulatory compliance with groundwater protection, assess ambient groundwater quality, and conduct research activities. The *Joint Report* also documents the enforcement status of all groundwater contamination cases under the jurisdiction of member agencies.

### Advises the TCEQ on development of agricultural chemical plans to prevent groundwater contamination

- The ***Texas State Management Plan for Prevention of Pesticide Contamination of Groundwater,*** TCEQ Publication SFR 070/01, is a management plan example that the Committee helped to develop.

## Subcommittees

The Committee has chosen to implement certain aspects of the *Strategy* and to work on special issues through various Subcommittees composed of agency staff, stakeholders, and the general public. The Subcommittees keep the Committee up-to-date on current issues and the status of on-going projects. The Subcommittees report to the Committee at its regularly scheduled meetings.

In addition to identifying new groundwater issues and developing or updating management plans (as needed), the primary goals of the **Groundwater Issues Subcommittee** are to:

- Facilitate interagency communication for assessment programs addressing groundwater contamination.
- Coordinate and assist member agencies with monitoring programs for:
  - Ambient groundwater conditions;
  - Pesticides; and,
  - Emerging contaminants or constituents of concern.
- Review published data reports and evaluate data independent of reports to assist in the determination of the effectiveness of existing regulatory programs.

- Review published data reports and evaluate data independent of reports for potential contaminants not addressed by existing regulatory programs.
- Develop recommendations for consideration by the TGPC to address potential groundwater contamination identified through monitoring and data review.

The **Public Outreach and Education (POE) Subcommittee** develops and implements educational outreach programs for landowners concerned with groundwater protection and environmental health issues and facilitates interagency communication and coordination in order to provide support for landowner educational outreach projects. Activities include developing educational materials, coordinating outreach programs, and completing special projects. Specific efforts have been devoted to areas of the state where groundwater has high levels of naturally occurring constituents of concern (e.g., nitrates, arsenic, and radionuclides), and on the state-wide education of landowners regarding on-site wastewater treatment and the proper closure of abandoned water wells. Current POE focus areas also include the Water Supply Enhancement Program, the Texas Well Owner Network, and Texas Evapotranspiration Networks. The Subcommittee's Groundwater Educational Outreach Plan, as well as a number of Frequently Asked Questions, are available through the Committee's web site.

The Committee reports its activities prior to every session through its biennial *Legislative Report*. The **Legislative Report Subcommittee** prepares this publication which describes the TGPC's activities for the two preceding years and provides recommendations to improve groundwater protection for Legislative consideration. The Subcommittee is only active 6 – 8 months before the legislative session. This Subcommittee facilitates the full Committee's efforts in publishing the report and is responsible for:

- Reviewing the draft report's contents;
- Revising the scope of the report as needed; and,
- Developing groundwater protection recommendations to the Legislature for full Committee approval.



## Further Information

For more information, or to obtain Committee publications, visit the Committee's web site at [www.tgpc.texas.gov](http://www.tgpc.texas.gov) or contact us at:

Texas Groundwater Protection Committee c/o  
Groundwater Planning and Assessment Team  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
Mail Code 147  
P.O. Box 13087  
Austin, Texas 78711-3087  
512-239-4691, FAX 512-239-4450



Many of the Committee's publications are also available through TCEQ's on-line Publications Catalog at [www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/search\\_pubs.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/search_pubs.html).

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