

Texas House of Representatives



Lyle Larson

State Representative - District 122

What's new in District 122

Howdy! Hope you're enjoying this bit of cold weather we're experiencing in beautiful San Antonio! We've had a busy October, which included being a part of a legislative panel alongside State Representatives Doug Miller and Garnet Coleman at the 90th Annual County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas (CJCAT) Conference, where I was honored to receive the CJCAT Freshman Legislator of the Year award. Also had the opportunity to sit on panels at the San Antonio Clean Tech Forum Water Forum III, Clean Air Through Energy Efficiency (CATEE) Conference in Galveston, the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute Health Care Summit in San Antonio, and spoke to the Environmental Science Institute Advisory Council at the University of Texas. A few weeks ago, I was invited to visit my old stomping grounds and receive a MacArthur High School Distinguished Alumni award at the Mac Arthur v. Roosevelt game. It was great to see old high school friends, cheer on the Brahmas and enjoy some San Antonio Friday night football!

Decision 2012: It's time to VOTE!

We know you are well aware that Early Voting is underway in Texas. Just in case you haven't had an opportunity to do your civic duty, we strongly encourage you to do it early! Early Voting runs through this Friday, November 2nd at various locations throughout Bexar County. We've experienced record turnout this election and predictions are that Election Day lines will be very long, so vote now to avoid the wait! Please visit [the Bexar County Elections website](#) for voting locations and hours, to view a sample ballot, or to answer any other questions you may have about voting in this most important election. Remember: "People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course, that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote - a very different thing."
~Walter H. Judd

The Pre-K Proposal

The City of San Antonio's pre-k initiative has received a lot of attention from voters throughout the city, as well as media throughout the nation. If you live within the San Antonio city limits, you will be eligible to vote on this proposal, which would authorize the City of San Antonio to raise the local portion of the sales tax 1/8-cent to provide pre-k education to qualifying 4-year-olds in our city. Both sides have debated the proposal at length and now it's time for San Antonians to be heard. Personally, I have strong

reservations about this initiative, but unfortunately, because my home is located outside of the San Antonio city limits, I won't be able to vote on the proposal. However, if it passes, I will end up paying the sales tax as there are few supermarkets and shops outside the city limits. I had the opportunity to debate San Antonio City Councilman Diego Bernal about the idea on Jack Riccardi's show on 550 KTSA. If you missed it, please listen to the podcast [here](#) if you're so inclined.

Victory or Death! The William Barrett Travis Letter

Earlier this month, the House Committee on Culture, Recreation and Tourism met to discuss various issues, including updates on addressing invasive species, the effect of the drought on tourism in our state, the Alamo, and the Battleship Texas. We received a great presentation on the efforts taken to eradicate and prevent the spread of the zebra mussel, a species that effectively kills an ecosystem once it is introduced into a water source. We heard from various folks involved in the recreation industry about how they are working to boost their business after the drought caused customers to refrain from swimming, fishing and doing other water related activities. We also discussed the prospect of dry-docking and moving the Battleship Texas away from the San Jacinto monument, where it currently sits, to prevent further rusting of its hull.

Finally, we addressed bringing the infamous "Victory or Death!" letter written by William Barrett Travis to be displayed at the Alamo during next year's anniversary celebration. The nearly 200-year-old, handwritten letter was composed by Travis at the Alamo in 1836. Previously, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission has chosen not to allow it to be transported and shown publicly, due to the possible risk of damaging the document. The Commission currently keeps the document in "dark storage" to best preserve it. We sent a letter to members of the Commission prior to their meeting last week, urging them to allow the letter to be transported and exhibited at the Alamo during the two-week anniversary celebration. After much deliberation, the Commission voted to allow the letter to be shown at the Alamo. The General Land Office, which provides oversight of Alamo operations, indicates they will privately raise the \$100,000 it will cost to transport and securely display the letter during that period. Please view [this excellent editorial by the San Antonio Express-News](#) about the plans for the Travis letter and [this 1200 WOAI article](#) about our efforts to ensure the letter is displayed at the Alamo.

Meeting of the Mayors of District 122

Last week we sat down with the Mayors from five of the suburban cities that are located entirely or partly inside Texas House District 122: Fair Oaks Ranch, Helotes, Hill Country Village, Hollywood Park, and Shavano Park. It was a great time for both an exchange of ideas among these mayors about relevant issues in their communities and an opportunity for us to talk about what we can do to address some of their concerns in the upcoming legislative session. With Hollywood Park Mayor Mark Perry, we discussed the limitation on uses for the hotel occupancy tax (HOT), as well as pursuing the removal of the 1/4 percent cap on infrastructure spending, which would help the town

adequately address needed road improvements. Infrastructure and transportation issues were a hot topic among virtually all the mayors with regard to specific projects in their communities, as well as preventing unfunded mandates coming down from the Legislature. Also at the forefront of the conversation was the financial challenge associated with running their own municipal courts. As it stands, the first \$92.10 of payment for a traffic ticket issued in these municipalities is collected by the state. As a result, some cities are unable to pay for the expenses associated with running a municipal court and end up losing money because they have to supplement the cost of running the court with general fund revenue. Other issues discussed include water, taxation, and annexation and ETJ issues. It's great to have mayors in the district who demonstrate leadership and are true public servants. We look forward to continuing to work with these mayors and have pledged to fight unfunded mandates in the upcoming session to ensure we don't financially burden our community's small cities.



With Mayors Mark Perry, Cheryl Landman, Tom Schoolcraft, Gabriel Durand-Hollis and David Marne

Water Tour of Deep South Texas

Early this month, we completed the final leg of our Water Tour of Texas with our visit to the Coastal Bend and Rio Grande Valley. First, we stopped in Edna, Texas to visit the folks at the Lavaca-Navidad River Authority (LNRA). We visited with Pat Brzozowski, LNRA's general manager, about the effects of the 2011 drought, which caused Lake Texana to drop 14 feet. A very proactive and forward-thinking entity, LNRA is looking into pursuing brackish desalination and aquifer storage and recovery to boost their water supply. Next, we stopped by the Corpus Christi City Hall to meet with my colleague, State Rep. Connie Scott, a few city council members and city staff. The City of Corpus has done a great job in creating and implementing their water management

plan and are currently investigating pursuing a seawater desalination project and a potential ASR facility.

From Corpus, we headed south to Brownsville to meet with the brains behind the multiple brackish desalination plants in the Rio Grande Valley. We toured the desalination facilities at the Southmost Regional Water Authority and the North Alamo Water Supply Corp. along with the plant managers, and leadership of the firm that completed the project, Abengoa Water USA/NRS Consulting Engineers. The plants supply 11 million gallons per day and 2.25 million gallons per day respectively, and with plans for expansion, desalinated water will likely become a much larger percentage of the total water supply. The Rio Grande Valley's diversification of water supplies and commitment to innovation are great examples for the balance of the state. After the plant tours, we attended State Rep. Eddie Lucio's 4th Annual Valley Environmental Summit in Brownsville. Various state and local agencies and environmental groups attended to discuss various issues. During the opening panel discussion, Rep. Lucio and I spoke about water planning and the Rio Grande Valley's success in delivering water to their community.

Finally, we headed north on 281 and stopped in George West at the Live Oak Underground Water Conservation District to meet with representatives from several different groundwater districts in the Eagle Ford Shale region. At the meeting, we discussed the challenges and opportunities that the shale play has provided for each of them. The attendees stressed that they are grateful for the economic activity in their region, but that they would like to have a better line of communication with the individual operators. They would also like to be notified by the Railroad Commission when new saltwater injection wells are drilled. We look forward to assisting them with these issues.



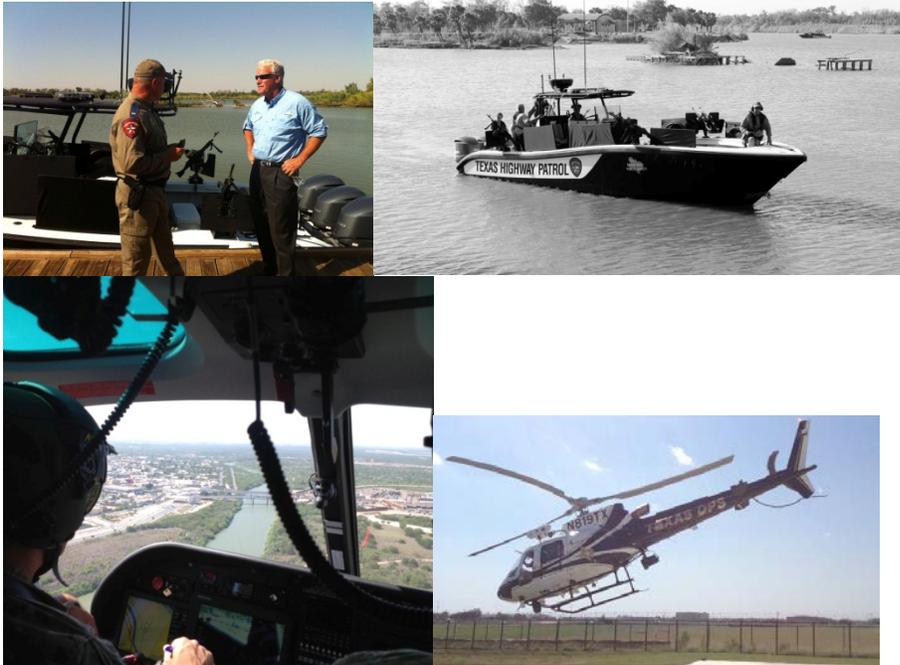
Touring the North Alamo Water Supply Corp. brackish desalination plant
Photo credit: Water PR

Protecting our Border: Texas Department of Public Safety

We took a break from touring desal plants while in the Rio Grande Valley to visit some of our state's bravest law enforcement officers at the Weslaco Department of Public Safety (DPS) regional headquarters. First, we met with DPS Regional Commander Joe Rodriguez and his staff. They discussed their efforts to protect our border and their work in performing drug interdiction and fighting gang violence in the region. On a daily basis, these folks fight the Zetas and the Gulf Cartel gangs that attempt to move drugs across the border. With their presence on land, in the air and on the water, they have been incredibly successful in shielding Texans from the spillover violence from Mexico. This drug war is responsible for over 47,500 murders in Mexico since 2006. Interestingly, due in large part to their efforts, the Rio Grande City sector has surpassed Yuma and Tucson, Arizona for the record of the most drugs confiscated from Mexican drug cartels.

We had the opportunity to ride along with DPS command staff Stacy Holland and Johnny Prince on a helicopter reconnaissance mission over the Rio Grande. After the helicopter ride-along, Team Larson boarded the heavily armed DPS Tactical Marine Unit with Lt. Charlie Goble. These triple engine boats patrol the Rio Grande daily and are becoming an integral part in our drug and gang interdiction program on the border. The DPS tactical team is well integrated with U.S. Border Patrol and coordinate joint captures with the Mexican Marines as well. Due to the hard work and diligence of the Texas DPS and other law enforcement agencies, over 100,000 pounds of marijuana was seized last year alone. Please take a quick look at [this article](#), which describes the challenges these officers face each day, and quotes some of the folks we were fortunate to have the opportunity to ride along with.

These troopers put their lives on the line every day to protect us, and unlike Arizona, Texas does not yield a single inch to the cartel due to the work of the Rio Grande Valley DPS. We are immensely grateful for their service to our great state.



Photos from our DPS tour - next to the Tactical Marine Unit with Lt. Charlie Goble, in the boat with DPS troopers, in the helicopter over the Rio Grande, taking off in the helicopter from the command station.

In the News

As always, please feel free to contact me if I may ever be of assistance to you by phone at (210) 402-5402 or by email at lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us.

Best,

Lyle Larson