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House Bill 4 Finally Passed

Legislation authored by Senator Troy Fraser (R-Horseshoe Bay) that will allow Texas to meet its future water needs was finally adopted by the Texas Senate on Monday. The bill is now on its way to the Governor's desk.

"I think every member of the Texas Legislature wants to do something to leave a mark," Fraser said. "I can think of no better legacy for all the members of the Legislature than to have found a solution so that our children and our grandchildren and all the generations to follow will have the water they need to thrive."

The 2012 State Water Plan shows that--over the next 50 years—the state's water supply is going to decrease 18%, while water demands are going to increase by 27%. The plan estimates how much water each region needs and identifies strategies to meet those needs.

House Bill 4 sets up the structure to provide meaningful financing to water providers across the state and finally moves Texas in the right direction of funding the state's future water needs. The State Water Implementation Fund for Texas is a water infrastructure bank that will revolve funds, so that over time—if properly capitalized—it can finance all the strategies included in the 2012 plan.

"The drought not only has an impact on the health and safety of our communities but it also affects our State's economy and the ability to attract new businesses," stated Fraser. "I am glad that we finally passed HB 4 to implement the State Water Plan, so we can ensure Texas will have sufficient water supplies during times of drought."

HB 4 would

- restructure the Texas Water Development Board to a 3 member, full time board;
- set out the oversight and management of the fund;
- direct the local regions and the Water Development Board to prioritize projects;
- enhance the state's bonding capability from existing constitutionally created programs and revenue bond programs; and
- recognize the importance of conservation use—while providing that funding must be directed toward our rural communities.