



# The Senate of Texas

CÉSAR J. BLANCO

TEXAS SENATOR  
DISTRICT 29

**Press Release**

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## **Senator César J. Blanco and Representative Andrew Murr Pass Legislation to Plug Abandoned Water Wells in Pecos County**

**Austin, Texas** – The Texas Senate has passed House Bill 4256, a bill authored by Representative Andrew Murr (HD53) and sponsored by Senator César J. Blanco (SD29) to create a fund to plug abandoned water wells, also known as P-13 wells, in Pecos County.

P-13 wells were drilled for the purpose of producing oil but were unsuccessful. As a result, unplugged or deteriorated P-13 wells open up layers of porous rock, revealing water and minerals, and toxic chemicals that are contaminating the surrounding land and air.

The most notorious case is Lake Boehmer in Pecos County, where a P-13 well has created a lake that covers over 60 acres, is three times saltier than the ocean, and has sulfate levels 25 times higher than safe drinking water. Last year, TxDOT had to spend \$30 million in Pecos County to move a State Highway due to sinking caused by Lake Boehmer.

“Many Ranchers in Far West Texas have been plagued by the environmental crisis caused by abandoned water wells. To address this issue, House Bill 4256 will create the Leaky Water Well Program to help finance the plugging of water wells,” said Senator César J. Blanco. “I appreciate Representative Murr for authoring this bill in the House, and I’m proud to have passed this bill with him to alleviate the environmental and public health concerns caused by P-13 wells.”

The Leaky Water Well Program will be administered by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and establish what projects are eligible for funding based on the threat the leaking well poses to its surrounding areas.

Representative Murr also added, “I am glad to have worked with Senator Blanco to send House Bill 4256 to Governor Abbott’s desk. This bill is a critical first step in solving the issues many West Texas landowners face when it comes to leaky water wells. By creating the Leaky Water Well grant program through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and funding it, certain groundwater districts will now be better able to assist landowners in mitigating the harmful effects some of these wells have had on our other water sources, livestock operations, and sensitive wildlife ecosystems.”

The bill now heads to Governor Abbott for final approval.

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