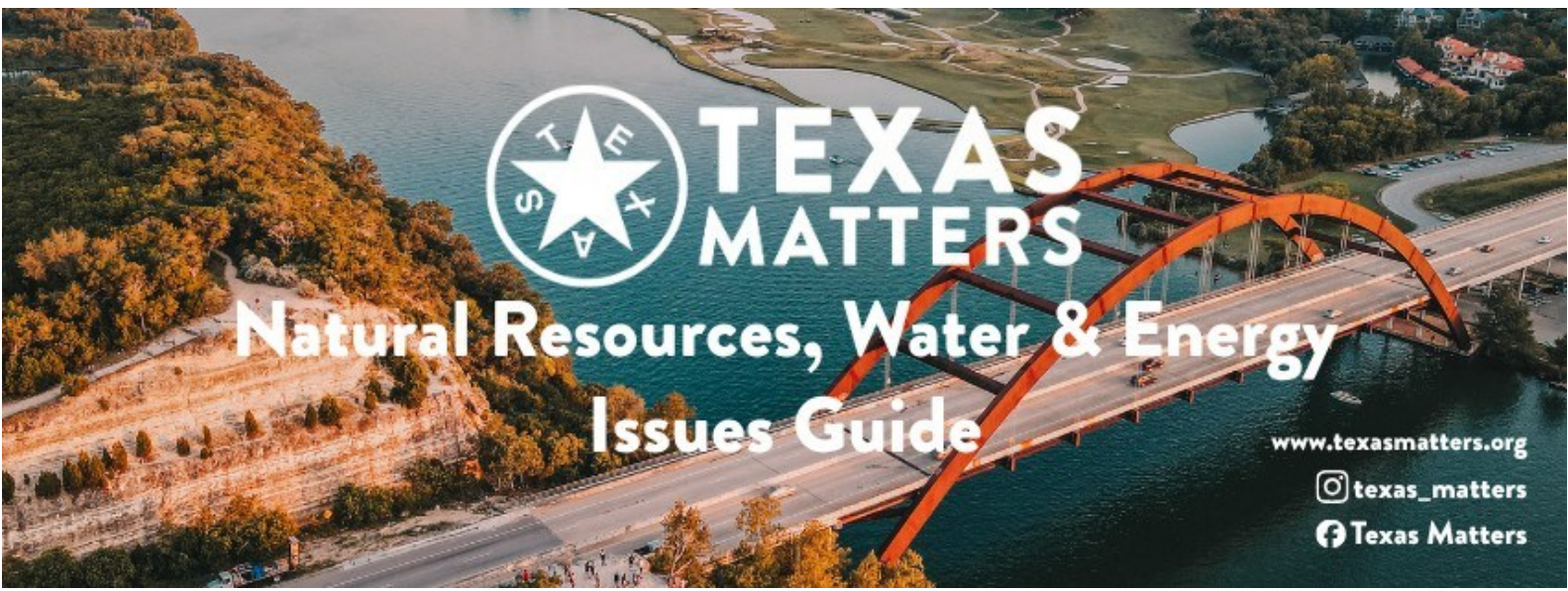




Texas Matters Principle

Texas' natural resources are among our state's greatest strengths.

Clean and ample water, reliable energy, productive land, healthy ecosystems, abundant wildlife, and beautiful parks support our economy, strengthen our communities, and enrich our quality of life.

As Texas continues to grow, responsible stewardship means balancing conservation, economic opportunity, and the needs of future generations so Texas remains a place where people and nature can thrive together.

What Matters Most to...?

ME

How do I ensure my family has the natural resources we need to thrive?

The natural resources I rely on every day—from clean water and reliable electricity to parks, wildlife, and open spaces—affect my family's health, quality of life, and future.

US

How can Texans responsibly manage our natural resources while supporting a growing population, a strong economy, and healthy communities?

Our communities must balance the needs of families, agriculture, businesses, recreation, conservation, and economic development while protecting the natural resources that sustain us all.

TOMORROW

What choices do we make today that will ensure future generations inherit a Texas with abundant natural resources, reliable energy, healthy waterways, thriving wildlife, and beautiful places to explore?

Careful planning for future generations includes **protecting our water supplies, strengthening the electric grid, responsibly developing oil, natural gas, and renewable energy resources, conserving parks and wildlife habitats, improving the health of our rivers and lakes,** and ensuring Texans can continue to enjoy the beauty and abundance that make our state unique.

Why This Matters

Texas' natural resources support our daily lives, our economy, and our quality of life.

In recent years, Texas has experienced recurring droughts and water shortages, increasing demand for electricity during extreme heat, and electric grid challenges during severe winter storms. **These experiences remind us that reliable natural resources are essential to our everyday lives.**

Texas' industries—from agriculture and energy to manufacturing, technology, healthcare, tourism, and small businesses—depend on reliable water, electricity, and other natural resources every day. When these resources are disrupted, businesses may slow or stop operations, employees may lose work hours, families may face higher costs, home values may drop and communities can experience significant economic hardship.

Understanding how Texas manages these resources helps Texans thoughtfully evaluate the choices before them, understand where candidates stand, and vote with confidence.

1. What are Texas' natural resources?

Answer

Texas is rich in natural resources that support both our economy and our quality of life. These include:

- Water

- Oil and natural gas
- Wind and solar energy
- Agricultural land
- Forests
- Rivers and lakes
- Wildlife and fisheries
- Parks and open spaces
- Minerals

These resources help power homes, produce food, create jobs, support recreation, and attract businesses and visitors from around the world.

Why It Matters

Texas' natural resources support the water we drink, the energy that powers our homes, the food we produce, the jobs that drive our economy, and the parks and wildlife that enrich our quality of life. Understanding how these resources are managed helps Texans evaluate public policies, long-term investments, and the choices that shape Texas' future—and **vote with confidence**.

2. Where does Texas get its water?

Answer

Texas receives water from a combination of:

- Rivers and reservoirs
- Underground aquifers
- Rainfall
- Springs
- Reclaimed and recycled water
- Limited desalination projects

Because rainfall varies across Texas and the population continues to grow, water planning is an important long-term responsibility.

Why It Matters

Water supports nearly every aspect of life in Texas—from the water we drink and the food we grow to the businesses we depend on and the communities we call home. Understanding where Texas gets its water helps Texans evaluate conservation strategies, infrastructure investments, and the choices that protect our water future—and **vote with confidence**.

3. Does Texas get water from Mexico?

Answer

Yes. **Texas does receive water from Mexico**, and for parts of the state—especially the **Rio Grande Valley**—that water is critically important.

The water sharing is governed by the **1944 Water Treaty** between the United States and Mexico.

Under the treaty:

- **Mexico** agrees to deliver water from **six tributaries of the Rio Grande** that originate in Mexico, including the **Rio Conchos**, over five-year cycles.
- Mexico is required to deliver **1.75 million acre-feet** of water every five years (an average of **350,000 acre-feet per year**, although deliveries can vary from year to year).
- **The United States**, in return, delivers **1.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water to Mexico each year**.

Why It Matters

Texas and Mexico share vital water resources that support drinking water, agriculture, businesses, and communities on both sides of the border. Maintaining this partnership requires responsible water management, ongoing cooperation, and long-term planning. Understanding these issues helps Texans evaluate water policy, international partnerships, and the choices that protect Texas' water future—and **vote with confidence**.

4. Will Texas have enough water for future generations?

Answer

Texas is expected to continue growing rapidly over the coming decades, increasing demand for water. **Currently, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the state of Texas is in a stage of drought.**

The challenge is driven by several pressures occurring at the same time:

- Rapid population and economic growth
- More frequent or severe drought conditions
- Aging and leaking local water systems
- Declining or constrained groundwater and surface-water supplies in some regions
- Growing industrial demand, including manufacturing, energy production and data centers
- The long lead time required to permit, finance and build major water projects

The problem is also highly local. A water demand that appears small as a percentage of statewide use may be significant in a community with limited infrastructure or a stressed aquifer.

Why It Matters

Water is one of Texas' most important natural resources, and meeting the needs of a growing state will require long-term planning, conservation, and investment. Understanding the challenges and choices that shape Texas' water future helps Texans evaluate public policies, infrastructure investments, and **vote with confidence**.

5. What is the Texas State Water Plan?

Answer

The Texas State Water Plan is developed every five years by the Texas Water Development Board using recommendations from regional planning groups across the state.

The plan identifies projected water needs and recommends strategies to help ensure reliable water supplies for future generations.

Why It Matters

Securing Texas' water future requires long-term planning, responsible stewardship, and strategic investment. Understanding the Texas State Water Plan helps Texans evaluate water policies, infrastructure priorities, and the choices that will support our families, communities, economy, and future generations—and **vote with confidence**.

6. How Is Texas Funding Future Water Projects?

Answer

In **November 2025**, Texas voters approved **Proposition 4**, creating a dedicated source of funding for the **Texas Water Fund**.

Beginning in **Fiscal Year 2028** (September 1, 2027), *the state may transfer up to \$1 billion per year* from state sales tax revenue into the fund through **2047**, potentially providing as much as **\$20 billion** to support Texas' long-term water needs.

The amendment **did not increase the sales tax rate**. Instead, it dedicates a portion of existing state sales tax revenue to water infrastructure projects, including:

- Developing new water supplies
- Repairing aging water systems

- Wastewater infrastructure
- Water conservation projects
- Other water infrastructure needs

At least **25%** of the funding must be used for projects that create **new water supplies**.

Why It Matters

Understanding how Texas plans and pays for long-term water projects helps Texans evaluate whether the state is making the investments needed to ensure reliable water supplies for families, businesses, agriculture, and future generations. It also helps citizens understand how voter-approved funding decisions can shape Texas' future and **vote with confidence**.

7. Did Proposition 4 guarantee that \$1 Billion a year would be dedicated to addressing the state's existing water challenges?

Answer

No. The transfer depends on state sales tax collections. Funding begins only after annual state sales tax revenue exceeds **\$46.5 billion**, with a maximum transfer of **\$1 billion** each year.

If sales tax collections are lower, the Water Fund receives less than \$1 billion. If collections reach approximately **\$47.5 billion or more**, the full \$1 billion can be transferred.

The funding dedication does **not begin until Fiscal Year 2028**, so it does not affect the current 2026–27 state budget.

Why It Matters

Proposition 4 created a dedicated funding source for Texas' water future, but annual funding depends on state sales tax collections. Understanding how the fund works helps Texans evaluate future water policies and **vote with confidence**.

8. How many years has the sales tax revenue exceeded \$46.5 billion?

Answer

Based on historical data from the Texas Comptroller, annual state sales tax collections have exceeded the **\$46.5 billion** threshold in only **two fiscal years**. Because deposits into the Texas Water Fund depend on annual sales tax collections, the amount transferred each year may vary with the strength of Texas' economy.

Why It Matters

Meeting Texas' future water needs will require both reliable funding and long-term planning. Understanding how the Texas Water Fund is financed helps Texans evaluate budget priorities, infrastructure investments, and the choices that will shape Texas' water future—and **vote with confidence**.

9. Why are data centers causing so much controversy in communities across Texas?

Answer

Texas has become one of the nation's leading locations for new data centers with hundreds in line for approval by the state.

This growth has raised questions about their impact on:

- **Electricity:** Large data centers require significant amounts of power, increasing demand on Texas' electric grid.
- **Water:** Many data centers use large amounts of water for cooling, raising concerns in drought-prone areas which include ~75% of the state.
- **Infrastructure:** New facilities may require additional investments in electric transmission, water systems, roads, and other public infrastructure.
- **Community Planning:** Local leaders must balance economic growth with the long-term availability of natural resources and the needs of existing residents and businesses.

Why It Matters

Data centers illustrate one of the key challenges facing a fast-growing Texas: balancing economic opportunity with the responsible management of water, energy, and public infrastructure. Understanding these tradeoffs helps Texans evaluate economic development, public investments, natural resource policies, and the choices that will shape Texas' future—and **vote with confidence**.

10. What power do counties have over data center development?

Answer

In Texas, **counties generally have limited authority over land use and zoning**. Unlike cities, counties do not have broad zoning powers unless specifically authorized by state law. As a result, counties often have limited ability to approve or deny where data centers are built based solely on land use.

However, counties may have authority over certain aspects of development, including:

- Road access and transportation impacts
- Floodplain regulations
- Subdivision requirements
- Building permits in limited circumstances
- Public health and safety regulations authorized by state law

Why It Matters

Understanding what authority counties do—and do not—have helps Texans know how development decisions are made, who is responsible for those decisions, how they can effectively participate in local discussions and **vote with confidence**.

11. What other entities have power over data center development?

Answer

- **Cities** may regulate land use and zoning within their municipal boundaries.
- **Electric utilities and ERCOT** determine how new facilities connect to the electric grid and whether additional transmission infrastructure is needed.
- **Water providers** determine whether adequate water supplies and infrastructure are available.
- **State agencies** oversee environmental permits, water rights, air quality, and other regulatory requirements.
- **Private developers** work with local governments and utilities to meet applicable requirements before construction begins.

Why It Matters

Understanding who makes these decisions helps Texans participate more effectively in their communities, advocate for the issues that matter most to them, evaluate the responsibilities of elected officials, and **vote with confidence**.

12. Why are clean air and water important to Texans?

Answer

Clean air and clean water support healthy families, thriving communities, and a strong economy.

They help:

- Protect public health
- Support agriculture
- Sustain wildlife
- Encourage outdoor recreation
- Attract businesses and residents
- Improve quality of life

State, local, and federal agencies all play roles in monitoring and protecting environmental quality.

Why It Matters

Protecting clean air and water requires decisions by many different organizations. Understanding who makes those decisions helps Texans participate more effectively in their communities, advocate for responsible stewardship of our natural resources, and **vote with confidence**.

13. Does Texas have air quality challenges?

Answer

Yes. Most Texans experience dozens of days each year with at least moderate air quality, and many urban areas experience multiple days each year when air quality reaches levels considered "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" because of ozone or particulate pollution.

Measure	Texas
Days with Moderate AQI or worse	Varies widely by location; many metropolitan areas experience 50–150+ days per year in the EPA's "Moderate" AQI category.

Measure	Texas
Days Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (AQI >100) or worse	Texas cities average about 5 days per year , although some metropolitan areas experience significantly more.
Houston area	Approximately 35 ozone days per year rated "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" or worse in recent American Lung Association analyses.
Dallas–Fort Worth	Roughly 10–20 unhealthy air quality days per year in recent years, depending on weather and wildfire smoke.

Why It Matters

Clean air supports healthy families, a productive workforce, thriving businesses, and strong communities. Understanding Texas' air quality challenges helps Texans evaluate environmental policies, public investments, and the choices that protect both our natural resources and our state's continued economic growth—and **vote with confidence**.

14. Who has responsibility for protecting clean air and water in Texas?

Answer

Protecting Texas' air and water is a shared responsibility among **local, state, and federal governments**, as well as businesses, landowners, and individual Texans.

Key decision-makers include:

- **The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)** oversees many of the state's air quality and water quality programs, including environmental permits, pollution monitoring, and enforcement of state and federal environmental laws.
- **The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)** helps protect rivers, lakes, wetlands, fish, wildlife, and natural habitats.
- **The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)** plans for the state's long-term water needs and helps finance water infrastructure projects.
- **The Railroad Commission of Texas** regulates the oil and natural gas industry, including activities that can affect water resources.
- **Cities and counties** make decisions about local infrastructure, stormwater management, land development, and other issues that can affect water quality and environmental health.
- **The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** establishes many national air and water quality standards and works with Texas to implement federal environmental laws.

- **Businesses, industries, farmers, ranchers, developers, and individual citizens** also play important roles by following environmental regulations, conserving natural resources, and adopting practices that help protect air and water quality.

Why It Matters

Protecting clean air and water requires decisions by many organizations working together. Understanding who is responsible for planning, permitting, regulating, and protecting Texas' natural resources helps Texans know where to direct questions and concerns, participate effectively in public discussions, advocate for the issues that matter most to them, evaluate the responsibilities of elected officials, and **vote with confidence**.

15. Is Texas' electric grid reliable?

Answer

Most of the time, yes. Texas' electric grid reliably provides electricity to millions of homes and businesses every day. However, periods of **extreme heat and severe winter weather** have highlighted challenges in meeting demand during unusual conditions.

Recent examples include:

- **Winter Storm Uri (2021):** Extreme cold led to widespread power outages across much of Texas after failures in electricity generation, natural gas supply, and other infrastructure.
- **Record Summer Heat (2023–2024):** During periods of extremely high temperatures, electricity demand reached record levels as air conditioning use increased. The grid remained operational, but ERCOT repeatedly asked Texans to conserve electricity during periods of peak demand.

Since Winter Storm Uri, Texas has taken steps to strengthen grid reliability, including:

- Requiring weatherization of many power plants and natural gas facilities
- Increasing reserve power resources
- Expanding electric transmission infrastructure
- Improving emergency preparedness and grid monitoring
- Encouraging the development of additional electric generation

At the same time, Texas continues to experience rapid population growth and increasing electricity demand from homes, businesses, manufacturing, and large facilities such as data centers. Meeting future demand while maintaining reliability remains an ongoing priority for state leaders, utilities, and ERCOT.

Why It Matters

Reliable electricity affects every Texan's safety, health, and economic well-being. Understanding how the electric grid works—and the challenges of planning for population growth, extreme weather, and increasing energy demand—helps Texans evaluate energy policies, infrastructure investments, and the responsibilities of state leaders. It also helps citizens ask informed questions, understand the choices before our state, and **vote with confidence**.

16. Which elected officials oversee Texas' natural resources?

Answer

No single elected official is responsible for all of Texas' natural resources. Responsibility is shared among several statewide officials, the Texas Legislature, and local governments.

Elected Official	Primary Responsibilities
Governor	Appoints leaders of many natural resource agencies (such as the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality), signs or vetoes legislation, and helps set statewide priorities.
Texas Legislature	Passes laws, approves agency budgets, creates water and energy policies, and oversees agencies through legislative committees.
Railroad Commissioners (3 elected)	Regulate the state's oil and natural gas industry, pipelines, natural gas utilities, and certain mining activities. Despite the name, the Railroad Commission no longer regulates railroads.
Commissioner of Agriculture	Oversees the Texas Department of Agriculture, supporting agriculture, promoting conservation practices, and protecting the state's food and agricultural resources.
Commissioner of the General Land Office	Manages state-owned lands, the Texas coastline, energy and mineral interests on state lands, and helps oversee coastal conservation and disaster recovery.
Local Officials	City councils, county commissioners courts, groundwater conservation districts, river authorities, and other local entities make decisions about land use, water infrastructure, parks, and other local natural resource issues.

Why It Matters

Natural resource decisions are made by **many different elected officials and agencies**, each with distinct responsibilities. Understanding who oversees water, energy, air quality, parks, wildlife, agriculture, and public lands helps Texans know where decisions are made, who is accountable, and how they can participate in shaping Texas' future. It also helps citizens ask

informed questions, advocate for the issues that matter most to them, evaluate the responsibilities of elected leaders, and **vote with confidence**.

17. Which state agencies oversee, with direction from elected leaders, our state's natural resources?

Answer

Several important agencies manage Texas' natural resources but are **not led by elected officials**. Instead, they are overseen by appointed boards or commissioners, including:

- **Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)** – Air quality, water quality, environmental permitting, and pollution control. The three commissioners are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate.
- **Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)** – Long-term water planning, financing water infrastructure, and administering the Texas Water Fund.
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)** – State parks, wildlife conservation, fisheries, hunting, boating, and outdoor recreation. Its commission is appointed by the Governor.

Why It Matters

State agencies play a central role in managing Texas' water, energy, air quality, parks, wildlife, and other natural resources. Understanding their responsibilities helps Texans know who makes decisions, where to direct questions and concerns, how elected leaders oversee these agencies, and how to **vote with confidence**.

18. Who has responsibility over natural resources?

Answer

Vote with Confidence

Texas' natural resources affect every Texan—from the water we drink and the electricity that powers our homes to the air we breathe, the parks we enjoy, and the industries that support our economy.

As you evaluate candidates and public policy, consider asking:

Water

- How will Texas ensure reliable water supplies for a growing population?
- What investments are needed to develop new water supplies and repair aging infrastructure?
- How should Texas balance the water needs of families, agriculture, businesses, and growing communities?

Energy & Electricity

- What steps should Texas take to maintain a reliable electric grid during periods of extreme heat and severe winter weather?
- How should Texas prepare for increasing electricity demand from population growth, manufacturing, and data centers?
- What role should different energy sources play in meeting Texas' future energy needs?

Natural Resources & Conservation

- How should Texas balance economic growth with responsible stewardship of water, land, wildlife, parks, and other natural resources?
- What policies can help protect clean air, clean water, and healthy ecosystems while supporting a strong economy?
- How should Texas conserve natural resources for future generations?

Growth & Infrastructure

- How should communities evaluate large projects such as data centers and other major developments?
- Who should be responsible for planning and paying for the infrastructure needed to support Texas' growth?
- How can local communities participate effectively in decisions that affect their natural resources?

Accountability

- What evidence supports these proposals?
- How will success be measured?
- What tradeoffs should Texans understand?

Reasonable people may support different approaches to managing Texas' natural resources. Understanding the opportunities, challenges, and tradeoffs helps Texans thoughtfully evaluate public policy, understand where candidates stand, and **vote with confidence**.

Texas Matters Takeaway

Texas' natural resources are among our state's greatest strengths. They provide the water we drink, the energy that powers our homes and businesses, the land that supports agriculture, the parks and wildlife that enrich our lives, and the resources that fuel one of the world's largest economies.

As Texas continues to grow, thoughtful stewardship will require balancing conservation, economic opportunity, infrastructure, and the needs of future generations. By understanding how these resources are managed, who makes the decisions, and the choices facing our state, Texans can help ensure our natural resources continue to support healthy communities, a strong economy, and a high quality of life.

Explore what matters most.
Understand the choices.
Vote with confidence.

Trusted Resources

- [Texas Water Development Board](#)
 - [US Drought Monitor](#)
 - [Texas Commission on Environmental Quality \(TCEQ\)](#)
 - [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#)
 - [Electric Reliability Council of Texas \(ERCOT\)](#)
 - [Texas General Land Office](#)
 - [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#)
 - [Texas 2036](#)
 - [University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology](#)
-