



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2014

Guillen Appointed to Desalination Joint Committee

Guillen, Others Appointed by Speaker Straus to Water-Related Interim Committees

AUSTIN – State Representative Ryan Guillen (D- District 31) has been appointed to the Joint Interim Committee to Study Water Desalination. This joint committee is one of four interim committees appointed by Speaker Joe Straus to address the state's water issues. The committee is charged with examining the status of ground and seawater desalination in Texas and investigating ways that expanded use of desalinated water could help meet Texas's needs.

"I am honored to have been appointed to represent rural South Texas on this committee," said Rep. Guillen. "Addressing Texas's water needs and cultivating a drought-resistant water supply are some of our highest priorities, and with 2.6 billion acre/feet of brackish water and a 367-mile coastline, water desalination is something that would be 'worth its salt' to investigate."

Ensuring access to potable water for all Texans has been a strong focus of the legislature for decades. However, due to persistent drought conditions, the cost and availability of freshwater have been obstacles to this effort. Desalination is the process of filtering seawater and brackish groundwater into freshwater so that it may be used for drinking. Texas currently has 46 municipal brackish water desalination facilities, including many in South Texas and the Valley. The project to create the state's first seawater desalination facility is currently in progress.

As to the significance of desalination efforts and his appointment to the committee to his district, Guillen said, "Our quality of life, future economic growth, and job creation in South Texas depends on finding new sources of fresh water. I look forward to working across the aisle with my colleagues in both chambers to address these issues."

In addition to the Joint Interim Committee to Study Water Desalination, the Speaker also appointed members to the SWIFT Advisory Committee, the Edwards Aquifer Legislative Oversight Committee, and the Environmental Flows Advisory Group.

The appointees will work to ensure that efforts to improve the state's water supply are properly and effectively implemented. They will also help the full House prepare to address water matters in the next legislative session, which begins in January 2015.

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