

Submitter: D Torres

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2808

Chair & Committee Members,.

I STRONGLY OPPOSE this bill. As a concerned member of the community, I believe these fee hikes will have significant negative consequences for individuals, families, and businesses that rely on wells for their water supply. Here are the key reasons why I believe this proposed increase should not move forward:

**Increased Financial Burden on Rural and Low-Income Families:** Many rural and farming communities rely heavily on private wells for their water supply. These families are already burdened by the costs of maintaining and operating their wells. The proposed increase in fees would disproportionately impact these individuals and families, many of whom are already struggling to make ends meet. An additional financial burden could force some to choose between maintaining their well or other basic necessities like food and healthcare.

**Unnecessary Financial Strain on Local Businesses:** Small businesses, particularly those in agriculture or those that require large amounts of water, such as certain manufacturing or hospitality businesses, will feel the impact of these increased fees. Many local businesses operate on thin margins, and an increase in fees for well permits, inspections, or maintenance would place an unnecessary strain on their operations. This could result in higher costs for consumers or even force some businesses to close their doors, further impacting the local economy.

**Lack of Transparency and Accountability:** The decision to increase fees should come with clear justification and a transparent breakdown of how the additional revenue will be used. Unfortunately, there has been little public information provided regarding the specific need for these fee increases. Without clear transparency on how the money will be spent, it is difficult to understand the rationale behind the increase. Taxpayers deserve to know how their funds are being allocated, and without this transparency, this proposal seems unfair and unjustified.

**Potential for Negative Environmental Impact:** An increase in fees could discourage well owners from maintaining or upgrading their wells, especially if they feel the costs are too high. This could lead to deteriorating water quality or improperly maintained wells that could ultimately harm the environment. Instead of increasing fees, we should be focusing on incentivizing proper well maintenance and ensuring safe, clean water for all.

Impact on Property Rights: Wells are an integral part of property ownership in many areas. When owners are forced to pay higher fees, it feels like an infringement on their rights to manage their own land and resources. The imposition of these higher costs could make well ownership more difficult for individuals, especially in already financially strained communities, thus limiting their ability to fully utilize and enjoy their property.

In conclusion, I urge policymakers to reconsider this proposed fee increase. It is clear that the potential negative impacts far outweigh any benefits, especially when it comes to vulnerable communities, local businesses, and the environment. Rather than increasing fees, we should be focusing on finding ways to make water management and well maintenance more affordable and accessible for all.

VOTE NO!