

February 19, 2013

Testimony of Perry L. Fowler on H.B. No.4

Mr. Chairman, and fellow members of the Committee, my name is Perry L. Fowler. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today in support of H.B. 4, legislation that is critical to the future of Texas.

Currently, I represent a number of Texas companies who build water infrastructure in addition to participating in the TWCA State Water Plan Implementation Task Force and various other Committees. Previously, I represented the construction industry for the AGC of Texas and the AGC of America on local, state, federal, and international funding and procurement issues.

Investing in our water future is not optional, and with the appropriate funding, H.B. 4 will provide the certainty that Texas communities and Texas contractors need to make the investments necessary to meet the needs of our growing state.

One of the most daunting issues facing the construction industry nationwide has been the lack of certainty in the marketplace. While the industry is rebounding, H.B.4 has the ability to advance projects and conservation strategies that Texas communities have identified as critical and it will solidify Texas' financial future and provide much needed jobs.

I applaud the Chairman and this Committee for your courage to address the number one impediment to prosperity in Texas and encourage you to be bold, knowing the decisions you are making here, relative to water, have implications for future generations of Texans.

There are two issues that I think we should all be mindful of as we proceed:

1. In addition to providing a stable funding mechanism and actual dollars, we must ensure that state agencies are prepared to do everything in their power to expedite projects and avoid unnecessary and costly regulatory impediments to get projects designed, approved, and finally moved forward to the construction process. The Texas Water Development Board, TCEQ, and other agencies must have the appropriate personnel and authority to advance projects and work with local project sponsors and federal regulators to ensure project delivery in a timely and responsible manner.
2. It is of the utmost importance that the Legislature and the Water Development Board work with the construction, design, and owner communities to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to guarantee accountability, transparency, and competition for infrastructure paid for with public dollars. Texas companies should be able to compete on a level playing field with large national and international design and construction firms. Any impediments or barriers, that fail to ensure fair competition, should be swiftly addressed by the Legislature and the Texas Water Development Board to maintain the public trust and the integrity of the public procurement system.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today in support of H.B. 4. I look forward to serving as a resource for the Committee as you proceed with this critical legislation. Please feel free to contact me I can be of service at plf@fowlertx.com or (512) 810-3969.

Sincerely,
Perry L. Fowler