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**Re: Your talk Wednesday at the 2026 Central Texas Water Conservation Symposium**

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**From** Sarah Kirkle <skirkle@texaswaterassociation.org>

**Date** Fri 3/6/2026 1:32 PM

**To** Mike Byrd <MikeByrd@sunrisebeachtx.gov>

Hi Mike,

Thanks for your email. Yeah, the time delay for Prop 4 isn't ideal, but the delay was primarily because the Legislature was crafting the next two-year budget at the same time they were considering Prop 4, so the delay allowed those budget negotiations to proceed without having to accommodate this big \$1B/year expense without knowing if Texas voters would pass it or not. There is another \$1B that was supposed to go to the Texas Water Fund this year that didn't quite pan out, and it could have floated us until Prop 4 money came in. I didn't go into a lot of detail on that because it's still under discussion, but issues with the language of that \$1B mean that TWDB has to essentially give away \$1B instead of using it within its existing financial assistance programs. So if your community needs help with water infrastructure, check out the grant program [here](#). TWDB put this out for public comment and anticipates formally adopting program guidance on 3/31, potentially with tweaks based on public comment.

On your question about technical audits, Sunset doesn't do that. Sunset reviews are essentially management audits/efficiency audits, along with a list of other evaluation criteria that are listed in law. I've gotten your exact question from several river authorities, and I understand your thought process and value it might add. The reason there isn't a separate technical review at this point is that technical aspects are often regulated or overseen by other entities, so Sunset would be duplicating their efforts. For example, TCEQ oversees quite a bit of the technical things that river authorities do, such as water quality/drinking water testing, dam regulation, and permit requirements (usually only on a complaint basis, but it exists). FERC would oversee hydropower facilities, etc. On your IT example, DIR does do some oversight in terms of cyber testing, etc. and is more involved in helping smaller agencies with less in-house expertise. Also, engineers are professionally licensed, so if their work is not up to par, they can be investigated and lose their license (again, complaint driven). But you're right that the technical oversight doesn't exist across the board and it's more reactive than proactive in some cases.

I think your question is, in many ways, a philosophical one about the role/scope of government oversight. I think you're also looking for a more comprehensive look at our water issues from a statewide perspective. That is 100% on the table right now. The Legislature tried it with an interregional planning council several years back, but that concept was missing some pieces to make it workable. Last session, SB 7 included a provision that requires TWDB to facilitate identification/coordination of projects across regions of the state. TWDB is still working through how to implement this, and is informed by some of the gaps in the earlier interregional planning council efforts. We should know more about how they'll approach that later this year.

Just my two cents... Thanks for listening this week!

Sarah

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**From:** Mike Byrd <MikeByrd@sunrisebeachtx.gov>

**Sent:** Friday, March 6, 2026 12:48 PM

**To:** Sarah Kirkle <skirkle@texaswaterassociation.org>

**Subject:** Your talk Wednesday at the 2026 Central Texas Water Conservation Symposium

Sarah,

I really did enjoy your presentation yesterday. You mentioned a couple of things I wasn't happy about (the \$1b not being available until late 2027), but that's politics! 😞

But I have another question. I believe your introduction mentioned that you had worked with the Texas Sunset Commission. I know they oversee LCRA, but I was wondering whether the Sunset Commission has ever conducted a technical audit of LCRA's river operations. As an engineer (and once a rocket scientist), I find it unbelievable that we have private organizations mandated by the state with no technical oversight.

I know this to be true, as I was the IT Director for the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (another private organization mandated by the state) for 9 years (late 1990s through mid 2000s), and we never had a technical audit or review conducted. We had administrative and financial audits by TDI and our own internal audit, but no technical audit.

My thoughts along this line are what you said about the \$20b funded by the state in the last legislative session. IMHO, we need an engineering committee to review all possible solutions for our state's water and energy needs and then devise a plan to achieve those goals. It seems short-sighted not to invest in a strategic 20-year plan.

Your thoughts?

Respectfully,

Mike Byrd

Sunrise Beach City Councilman

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