# Flood Mitigation in Texas: Planning on Improvements

TEXAS LIVING WATERS

The adoption of Texas' first State Flood Plan in September 2024 was a momentous step forward in protecting the roughly 5 million Texans who live or work in areas at risk of flooding. Texas leads the nation in the loss of lives and property due to flood disasters, and the need to plan carefully for risk mitigation is becoming more clear as extreme weather events increase in frequency and severity. The State Flood Plan is important because it evaluates risks at the watershed scale and facilitates coordination between local governments to implement solutions. Of course, the recommendations made through this process are only useful if they are implemented -- projects and evaluations recommended in the state flood plan are eligible to receive financial assistance through the Flood Infrastructure Fund.

The 2024 State Flood Plan also lists several *legislative* recommendations, including some developed by the flood planning staff at the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and others expressed on behalf of the state's 15 regional flood planning groups. Knowing that these recommendations were developed by experts in the field of flood mitigation and local representatives with a deep understanding of the needs in their regions, Texas Living Waters called for their implementation as one of our policy priorities during the 89th Texas Legislature's regular session. We continue to support these common-sense measures which would improve flood mitigation across Texas.

**Please see the back of this page for a list of legislative recommendations from the 2024 State Flood Plan and their implementation status.**

To view the full 2024 State Flood Plan, scan this code or visit texasstatefloodplan.org

*(Legislative recommendations are found in Volume I, Section 2)*

To view our full set of policy priorities and other publications promoting resilient flood mitigation practices in Texas, scan this code or visit texaslivingwaters.org.

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| TWDB Recommendations | Status of Legislative Implementation |
|---|---|
| Allocate dedicated funding through the TWDB for flood mitigation, including the Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF), regional planning, risk modeling, and mapping.<br><br>*Supported by Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15* | HJR 7 / SB 7 passed; FIF is one of many programs that may receive transfers from the Texas Water Fund. |
| Create and fund a technical assistance program to develop and/or perform floodplain management activities in small, rural, and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.<br><br>*Supported by Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15* | No action. |
| Increase funding for low water crossing safety, prioritizing high-risk locations based on traffic, road types, and flood risk, with structural upgrades and warning systems.<br><br>*Supported by Regions 9, 10, 11, 12* | No action. |
| Prioritize and expand funding for implementing flood early warning systems on a regional scale, with emphasis on rural areas.<br><br>*Supported by Regions 11 and 12* | No action. |
| Develop a levee safety program and enhance the Dam Safety Program to further identify and assess risks to dams and levees.<br><br>*Supported by Regions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11* | No action. |

| Regional Planning Group Recommendations | Status of Legislative Implementation |
|---|---|
| Allow counties to collect drainage fees in unincorporated areas and clarify their floodplain management authority.<br><br>*Recommended by Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15* | HB 190 (Zwiener) was filed on July 23 and is pending committee assignment. |
| Develop and adopt minimum statewide design standards to reduce flood-related damage and loss of life.<br><br>*Recommended by Regions 1, 6, 7, 11* | No action. |
| Update consistent, statewide building codes.<br><br>*Recommended by Regions 6, 7, 10, 11, 13* | HB 227 (Reynolds) was filed on July 29 and is pending committee assignment. It is a re-file of HB 882, which did not pass during the 89th regular session.<br><br>HB 871 (Reynolds) also did not pass during the 89th regular session. |
| Align TxDOT projects with local flood standards and require critical infrastructure to be built at elevations at or above 1% (100-year) annual chance storm event, considering future flood risks, including:<br>• Local regulation integration for TxDOT projects where local regs exceed state criteria *(Recommended by Regions 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12)*<br>• Critical infrastructure protection *(Recommended by Regions 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13)*<br>• Minimum elevation standards for roadways *(Recommended by Regions 6, 10, 12)* | No action. |

**Texas Living Waters** is a coalition of conservation organizations working together to ensure Texas has the water it needs for thriving communities and healthy fish and wildlife. | **texaslivingwaters.org**

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