

# Support HB 2827

A permit change for Bosque Watershed dairies will bring regulatory certainty, support Texas milk production growth.

## Background:

For decades, until the early 2000s, Erath, Bosque and Comanche counties in Central Texas were the center of the Texas dairy industry. Erath County led the state in milk production for many years, and 200 dairies operated in that county in 1995. Today, only 43 dairies remain.

Instead, dairy farmers have moved into or relocated into the North Panhandle and South Plains area, from Dalhart to Muleshoe, where the number of cows has increased by a whopping 3,500% from 1995 to 2015.

**What's behind the enormous geographic shift in Texas' dairy industry?  
Regulatory burdens and their high cost to Central Texas dairy farmers**

## Current regulation:

Central Texas is one of the most regulated watersheds in the nation. In 2001, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), as part of a TMDL Implementation Plan, imposed regulations in the Bosque Watershed on municipalities (from Stephenville to Waco) and on dairies in Erath, Comanche and Hamilton counties.

The municipalities spent tax dollars to enhance their municipal wastewater treatment facilities to meet the strenuous regulatory standards. Dairy farmers in the Bosque Watershed have been required to obtain an individual permit instead of the general permit allowed of dairy producers in the rest of the state.



## Texas Dairy Industry 2022

- Produced 1.9 billion gallons of milk (up 6% from 2021)
- 319 dairies
- 625,000 milk cows
- \$50.3 billion economic impact
- 253,000 direct & indirect jobs

## Why individual permits harm dairies:

This individual permit requires more intensive management, is more expensive to prepare and submit, and requires more TCEQ staff time to review and process, resulting in significant delays to obtain or renew the permits. As a result, in the past two decades, three-fourths of dairies in Erath County, for example, left the region or went out of business altogether.

## Support HB 2827

**Rep. DeWayne Burns**

**Overall water quality goals for the Bosque Watershed set out in 2001 by the TCEQ have been achieved.**

HB 2827 seeks to remove the individual permit requirement in the Bosque Watershed and allow dairy farmers in the region to operate under the general permit used by dairies throughout Texas, while keeping stringent, best management places in place.

**HB 2827 is critical for Texas' dairy industry – poised to become the third largest milk producing state in the nation – to continue to grow and remain strong.**



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Darren Turley**  
Executive Director  
dturley@milk4texas.org  
(817) 304-4139

**Lauren Fairbanks**  
lauren@moontowerpa.com  
(512) 850-8699

**J Pete Laney**  
jpete@jpetelaneylaw.com  
(512) 799-6341