

# Tyler County Forest Landowner Association

Saturday, September 21, 2024

**Legislative Concerns and Initiatives Impacting Landowners.** Tyler County's Texas Representative Trent Ashby is a tree farmer. He shared information regarding several Texas Bills that impact landowners, particularly tree farmers which tend to be in rural areas. Rep. Ashby stated that the best bills are those that originate from constituents. Both the Texas Forestry Association and the Texas A&M Forest service have provided ideas for several bills.

A recently passed Timber Theft law addresses chain-of-custody of loads delivered to mills, making it more difficult for theft to be successful. Additionally, effective September 2023, timber theft is a felony.

A law was passed to prevent frivolous lawsuits associated with minimal, incidental smoke from prescribed burns. Currently there are few Certified and Insured Prescribed Burn Managers (CIPBMs) and Rep. Ashby would like to see the number increase. With only one prescribed burn insurance underwriter in Texas, Rep. Ashby is interested in working on legislation to address the lack of insurance options for CIPBMs.

One of the issues to be addressed during the next Texas legislative session is the acquisition of aircraft to fight wildland fires. Currently Texas is subject to the availability of such aircraft from other sources.

The Right-to-Farm, which protects farmers from nuisance lawsuits by neighbors, is now a part of the Texas constitution. Being a part of the constitution protects this right from being changed without first going back to voters.

Rep. Ashby wants to craft a program that will provide funds to rural counties for road repairs after a declared natural disaster.

Rep. Ashby is looking to work with the Texas Forestry Association and the Texas A&M Forest Service to craft a bill that will encourage Mass Timber mills in Texas.