



# SENATOR JANE NELSON

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## **TROPICAL STORM HARVEY: TEXAS RESPONSE**

Tropical Storm Harvey continues to devastate the Texas coast with lives lost, property destroyed or damaged, and thousands of Texans displaced from their homes. As of Friday, September 1, 2017, 32,523 people were living at shelters throughout the state, including hundreds in the North Texas Metroplex. The Governor has issued disaster declarations for 58 counties – 29 of which have been approved as Presidential Disaster areas, making these counties eligible for direct federal assistance. Following is an overview of actions being taken by the State of Texas in response to this natural disaster:

### **Rescue & Recovery**

More than 15,000 relief personnel have been dispatched to the coast. The entire Texas National Guard has been deployed by the Texas Military Department, which has 560 vehicles, 30 boats, 26 shelters, and 38 aircrafts. In addition, a total of 2,099 Department of Public Safety (DPS) personnel have been temporarily relocated to the affected areas and include but are not limited to: 1,450 DPS troopers, 262 Criminal Investigations Division personnel, and 79 Texas Rangers. Vehicular assets in the region include but are not limited to 17 tactical marine boats, 12 additional boats, 20 ATV's, seven helicopters, and two fixed wing aircrafts.

### **Public Utilities Commission**

PUC approximates that 293,477 customers are experiencing outages due to the storm. At least 2,100 utility poles and 55 transmission structures were knocked down. Crews are working to repair over 50 transmission lines in the Corpus Christi area alone. To keep up with outages and efforts to restore power, visit <http://puc.texas.gov/agency/resources/HurricaneHarvey2017.aspx>

### **Texas Department of Insurance**

TDI is reassuring Texas policyholders that the agency will aggressively enforce state laws to protect storm victims. The claims filing process and deadlines aren't changing September 1. House Bill 1774 from the last regular session does not change how homeowners file a claim, deadlines to file claims, or how insurers process claims. TDI is sending staff to affected areas this week to help victims file claims and has extended hours for its Consumer Help Line. The TDI Help Line, 1-800-252-3439, is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The following links to information and resources for homeowners who don't have flood insurance (<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/consumer/storms/helpafterharvey.html>)

### **Texas Workforce Commission**

TWC is accepting applications for Disaster Unemployment Assistance in 18 counties as a result of severe weather due to Hurricane Harvey. Applications can be taken by calling a TWC Tele-Center Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 800-939-6631 or online at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/jobseekers/unemployment-benefits-contact-information-claimants>.

### **Texas Department of Criminal Justice**

So far five TDCJ facilities have been evacuated and a total of 5,842 inmates have been distributed between 18 facilities that had available capacity across the state. Also 926 parolees and probationers were evacuated from Houston and Beaumont and moved to five other units across the state.

### **Health & Safety**

The Department of State Health Services conducted more than 165 missions and evacuated about 1,100 patients with special needs. Medical shelters have been established in San Antonio and Austin. There are 21 hospitals that are evacuated or currently evacuating. About 200 FEMA ground ambulances and 25 air ambulances have been integrated into state operations. The Texas Health & Human Services Commission has received federal approval to implement a hot foods Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) waiver. Additionally, participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program who evacuated can go to any open WIC clinic to receive replacement food benefits. For more information on health and human services for individuals impacted by the disaster, call 2-1-1.

### **Texas Department of Parks & Wildlife**

Game wardens are playing an integral role in rescue and recovery operations, along with the TPWD Aircrew, and have been joined by game wardens from neighboring states. A combined 505 game wardens and park peace officers from Texas, Louisiana and Florida are operating in the Houston area and have participated in 5,676 water rescues. Wardens from three other states have also been deployed to Texas. Additionally a 61-man State Park Police Team is assisting with 3,899 evacuees housed in State Parks.

### **Animals & Livestock**

The Texas Animal Health Commission is working closely with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas Department of Agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture, and industry partners to establish shelters and regional animal supply points. For additional information on animal shelters, lost and found livestock, or carcasses call 512-719-0799 or visit <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/emergency/index.html>. For questions or information about animal supplies and feed contact Texas A&M Agrilife at 979-845-7800.

### **Texas Department of Transportation**

There are about 2,400 personnel and over 1,800 pieces of equipment deployed across the affected regions performing restoration, flood control, debris removal and high water rescue support. TxDOT is discouraging travel in areas with high water or debris in the roadways. For the latest on road conditions, visit [www.drivetexas.org](http://www.drivetexas.org)

### **Energy Production**

The Railroad Commission is assuring Texans that there is no gas shortage – but that panic over a potential shortage is impacting supply. All offshore facilities in the Gulf – 737 production platforms and 30 oil drilling rigs - were properly secured or evacuated (almost 200), and employees are safe. Nine refineries have been closed. There has been some damage to Texas ports – which receives about three million barrels per day of crude oil. The Railroad Commission has more than 100 inspection staff across the region, and those staffers work to assess infrastructure in areas where flooding does not prevent staff access.