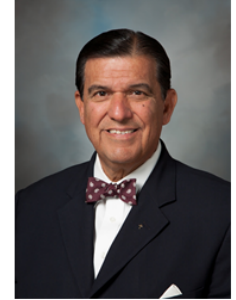




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June 16, 2014

**State legislators to visit Rio Grande Valley  
to study desalination efforts**

**AUSTIN** - A group of state legislators will conduct a fact-finding tour of desalination facilities in Cameron County in July, it was announced today (Monday). The announcement comes after Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville), a member of a joint committee of Texas State senators and representatives tasked with studying desalination efforts across the state, invited his colleagues to study such efforts in his Senate district.

Members of the [Joint Interim Committee to Study Water Desalination](#) will tour brackish desalination facilities of the Southmost Regional Water Authority in Brownsville on Monday, July 28, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Rep. Todd Hunter (R-Corpus Christi), co-chairman of the committee, said the tour will be voluntary for committee members.

"I could not be more excited to welcome my colleagues to Brownsville, where local leaders have developed incredible models for desalination which might be adopted statewide," Senator Lucio said. "In the midst of a historic drought, expanding desalination efforts must be at the top of Texas' priorities for meeting growing water demands."

In a letter dated May 19, 2014, Senator Lucio invited the joint committee's chairmen, Rep. Hunter and Sen. Craig Estes (R-Wichita Falls) to conduct a public hearing of the committee in Brownsville.

"As we research the benefits of water desalination, I encourage our Joint Interim Committee to examine Brownsville's efforts in utilizing both seawater and brackish water desalination. Brownsville has been proactive in trying to determine the viability and sustainability of seawater desalination," Senator Lucio wrote.

The Brownsville Public Utilities Board has operated a brackish water desalination plant since 2003. The utility previously collaborated with the Texas Water Development Board and the Port of Brownsville on a saltwater desalination pilot project at the Brownsville ship channel. That pilot has since concluded.

The Joint Interim Committee to Study Water Desalination was created pursuant to passage of [House Concurrent Resolution 59](#), which was sponsored by Sen. Lucio and Rep. Hunter during the 83rd Legislative Session last year. Senator Lucio was [appointed to the committee in January](#).

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**A copy of Senator Lucio's May 19 letter to Rep. Hunter and Sen. Estes is attached.**