

**SUBJECT:** Establishing the Texas Olive Oil Industry Advisory Board

**COMMITTEE:** Agriculture and Livestock — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — Springer, Anderson, Beckley, Buckley, Burns, Fierro, Meza, Raymond, Zwiener

0 nays

**WITNESSES:** For — Cathy Bernall, Texas Association of Olive Oil, Lone Star Olive Ranch; Michael Paz, Texas Association of Olive Oil, Texana Brands, Texana Olive Ranch; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Christine McCabe, Texas Association of Olive Oil, Texas Mobile Mill; Robert Turner, Texas Poultry Association)

Against — None

On — Dan Hunter, Texas Department of Agriculture; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Larry Stein, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)

**DIGEST:** HB 1514 would establish the Texas Olive Oil Industry Advisory Board to assist the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

The board's duties would include assisting TDA in:

- assessing the state of the Texas olive and olive oil industry;
- developing recommendations to the agriculture commissioner and the Legislature to promote and expand the industry;
- identifying and obtaining grants and gifts to promote and expand the industry; and
- developing a long-term vision and marketable identity for the industry.

The board also would be charged with reviewing and providing guidance on rules impacting the Texas olive and olive oil industry.

The board could accept grants and gifts from any source to carry out its duties. It would be administratively attached to TDA, which would provide staff necessary to carry out the boards' duties.

The nine-member board would be appointed by the agriculture commissioner and would consist of:

- five members who were olive growers, each of whom would represent one of the five olive-growing regions of Texas as determined by the commissioner;
- one representative of infrastructure who was engaged in harvesting, milling, or agritourism;
- one researcher or educator who was employed by an institution of higher education;
- one representative from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; and
- one representative from TDA.

The members of the board would serve staggered six-year terms, with the terms of three members expiring on February 1 of odd-numbered years. Board members could be reappointed at the end of a term.

The board would elect a presiding officer from among its members.

For state officers or employees, serving on the board would be considered an additional duty of their office or employment. Members on the board would not be entitled to compensation or reimbursement of expenses.

The board would be required to meet twice each year as well as at other times deemed necessary by the agriculture commissioner.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

HB 1514 would create an advisory board to the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) that would help the department in assessing the Texas olive oil industry and work to promote and expand the industry.

The board could help the Texas olive industry to grow and positively impact the Texas economy by leveraging state resources for research and planning purposes. The creation of an advisory board also would help legitimize the industry. TDA has similar advisory boards for other specialty crops, including shellfish, wine, and spinach industries.

There are concerns that some olive oil sold as "Texas Olive Oil" is not grown or produced in the state. An olive industry-specific board could work with the Department of Agriculture to guarantee the authenticity of olive oil marketed as a Texas product.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

HB 1514 would create an advisory board that is probably unnecessary. The olive industry's trade association could assess its needs and deliver recommendations to the agriculture commissioner and Legislature.