

Valley & State

Group praises local lawmakers' voting on environmental bills

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AUSTIN — An environmental political action committee praised Rio Grande Valley lawmakers for voting for what the committee said are "green" bills in the last legislative session.

The Texas League of Conservation Voters studied records of members of the Texas House on 13 votes relating to seven bills. continued from page 1B

Those with a perfect score said they were pleased by the distinction, but voted for their districts, not necessarily the environment. They were: Rep. Armando "Mando" Martinez, D-Weslaco; Rep. Veronica Gonzales, D-McAllen; and Rep. Jim Solis, D-Harlingen.

"I tried to make votes that were consistent with my district, and that were the right votes, and I'm happy to see that it came out to 100 percent," Gonzales said.

Martinez said he had not looked at the criteria used for the ranking, but was pleased by the recognition.

"We need to make sure that what we're voting on is going to be good for the environment and good for the district," he said. "Of course it's always our district first."

Solis said he did not work specifically for environmental

Some of the votes were on amendments to bills.

Seven of the Valley's eight lawmakers scored better than 50 percent, and three scored a perfect 100.

"It's heartening to know they understand the vital importance of protecting and promoting our natural resources," said David Carrales, president of Frontera Audubon.

issues in the session, but tried to do no harm.

"I'm glad that they see me as being part of the team, because I did have a lot of good intentions to move business forward, but also not at the expense of the environment," Solis said.

State Rep. Rene Oliveira, D-Brownsville, received the lowest score at 23 percent. He had unexcused absences during four of the 13 votes, which lowered his score.

Some of the votes the group studied dealt with regulation of rock-crushing facilities, environmental rules governing developers and requirements for facilities to monitor toxic air emissions.

Many more environment-related bills were filed during the legislative session.

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Environmental scorecard, according to the Texas League of Conservation Voters

Percentage of "green" votes* from regional lawmakers:

Rep. Ryan Guillen, Rio Grande City	60
Rep. Ismael "Kino" Flores, Mission	85
Rep. Aaron Peña, Edinburg	85
Rep. Veronica Gonzales, McAllen	100
Rep. Armando "Mando" Martinez, Weslaco	100
Rep. Jim Solis, Harlingen	100
Rep. Rene Oliveira, Brownsville	23
Rep. Juan M. Escobar, Kingsville	92

*Scores were based on 13 votes covering seven bills.