



A Special Investigations Unit Report Regarding  
**The Texas State  
Soil and Water Conservation Board**

November 10, 2003

Members of the Legislative Audit Committee:

On October 1, 2003, the District Attorney of the 39th Judicial District in Haskell, Texas, accepted a guilty plea to an Information for the offense of theft from defendant Terry J. Rodriguez, a former employee of the Haskell Soil and Water Conservation District (District). An Information is a formal charging instrument used by a prosecuting authority in lieu of a grand jury indictment. Ms. Rodriguez's plea to an Information resulted in quicker disposition without a formal trial.

An investigation by the State Auditor's Office Special Investigations Unit determined that Ms. Rodriguez misappropriated \$5,702 of state funds and \$1,196 of District funds while she was employed by the District. A review of District financial records conducted by a local certified public accounting firm revealed that Ms. Rodriguez had issued additional payroll checks to herself from two checking accounts for which she had responsibility for maintaining. The review identified 19 separate transactions made from January 1999 through August 2002 in which Ms. Rodriguez issued funds to herself that she was not entitled to receive. The Executive Director of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board made the complaint regarding this matter to the State Auditor's Office.

The offense of theft in an amount over \$1,500 and less than \$20,000 is a state jail felony. Ms. Rodriguez was granted two years probation/deferred adjudication and was ordered to pay a \$500 fine and court costs. She made full restitution of the theft amount to the District.

If you have any questions, please contact Harold Burns or John Weber, Special Investigations Unit, at (512) 936-9500.

Sincerely,

Lawrence F. Alwin, CPA  
State Auditor

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cc: Mr. Rex Isom, Interim Executive Director, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board  
The Honorable Michael E. Fouts, District Attorney, 39th Judicial District

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (Board) is a state agency with headquarters in Temple, Texas. The Board provides state funds to the State's 216 local soil and water conservation districts through technical assistance grants. These funds are allocated to the districts to help employ staff to operate the district offices.

The Special Investigations Unit investigates reports of illegal activity involving state agencies and universities.

Texas Government Code, Section 321.022, requires state agencies and universities to report suspected fraud or unlawful conduct to the State Auditor's Office if there are facts that point to fraud or unlawful conduct.

To report suspected illegal activity, call 1-800-TX-AUDIT (1-800-892-8348), send a fax to (512) 936-9400, visit [www.sao.state.tx.us](http://www.sao.state.tx.us), or mail information to the State Auditor's Office, Attn: SIU, P.O. Box 12067, Austin, Texas 78711.

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