



TEXAS WATER DAY 2007

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EXTRA

Priority Water Issues For Texas

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT/ TX ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Rapid reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is needed to assist Texas in implementing the State Water Plan. WRDA also should provide for the Texas Environmental Infrastructure Program, directing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to align with state goals and objectives for planning, engineering, design, and construction of water supply, wastewater, water quality, and environmental projects.

BACKGROUND: The nation faces serious water challenges – deteriorating infrastructure, increasing demands for water resources functions, competing water uses, and environmental challenges – in a climate of stagnant or diminishing fiscal resources and fragmented responsibilities. These challenges are most effectively met head on, through a partnership of local, state, and federal resources.

Texas state and local entities have committed considerable time and money to evaluate and develop comprehensive strategies for adequately managing water needs. The State

Water Plan serves as a roadmap for implementing water management strategies to ensure adequate water supplies for our people, economy, and environment.

Indeed, seven years have elapsed since WRDA was last passed to guide the work of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. **Reauthorization**

ENACT a Water Resources Development Act in the first session of the 110th Congress that enhances the ability of the Corps of Engineers to be a productive water resources management partner for Texas and that provides for the Texas Environmental Infrastructure Program.

is needed now to ensure a strong local-state-federal partnership to address complex water challenges and to direct the Corps toward a more effective alignment with the goals and objectives of the states in managing water resources. The efforts to establish a viable Texas-federal partnership should include a Texas Environmental Infrastructure Program (TEIP). The TEIP is needed to provide opportunity for federal partnerships statewide.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY FUNDING

Data provided by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) streamgages are critical for planning and managing Texas water resource issues, providing a long-term set of invaluable hydrological data for state and local water resources officials. Continued reductions in the federal budget for funding USGS streamgaging jeopardizes flood response as well as planning and managing for droughts, water supply, irrigation, water rights, fisheries, and recreation.

BACKGROUND: Water resources data are vital to ensure economic development, public health and environmental protection. The USGS Cooperative Water Program (CWP) is a critical component to this base of knowledge, but the federal portion of funding for streamgaging under CWP has been steadily declining for the past several years. CWP originally

funded streamgages at a cost share of 50 percent federal and 50 percent non-federal. Recent flat funding levels by USGS, coupled with increasing costs due to inflation and salary increases, have led to a current cost share of approximately 33 percent federal and 67 percent non-federal. The result has been an annual loss of approximately 70 streamgaging stations nationwide. At a time when water supply, emergency management, and environmental

monitoring are increasingly critical, the continued erosion of basic data collection compromises our national interests.

SUPPORT full funding for the USGS Cooperative Water Program (CWP) to return to a 50% federal/50% non-federal cost share in Texas. A plus up of \$2.9 million from the Administration's FY2008 budget, earmarked for Texas streamgaging, would restore the 50/50 balance.

SUPPORT full funding in Texas for the USGS National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP). A plus up of \$2.7 million from the Administration's FY2008 budget, earmarked for Texas NSIP streamgaging, would ensure a core network of streamgages in the state.

For more information, contact:

Texas Water Conservation Association
Leroy Goodson, TWCA General Manager
J. Tom Ray, TWCA Federal Affairs Committee Chair
221 East 9th St., Suite 206 Austin, Texas 78701
512.472.7216

Other Statewide Water Issues for Texas

FEMA FUNDING FOR FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT AND DAM & LEVEE SAFETY

Floods constitute the most frequent, destructive, and costly natural hazard in Texas, accounting for 90 percent of the total damage. Most recently, Hurricanes Rita and Claudette demonstrated the need for a coordinated watershed approach to address floodplain management in order to prepare for and recover from natural disasters.

SUPPORT H.R. 389 – Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2007 – to amend the National Dam Safety Program Act and authorize a new grant program with FEMA for states to rehabilitate publicly owned dams in need of repair.

SUPPORT federal funding of \$150 million for Pre-disaster Mitigation Grants in FEMA budget and \$200 million for FEMA's Map Modernization Program.

SUPPORT funding to USDA Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program for rehabilitating aging flood control infrastructure.



INVASIVE AQUATIC & RIPARIAN PLANTS

Invasive plants in Texas waterways are seriously impacting water supply and quality, hydropower production, flood control, navigation, recreation, fish and wildlife benefits, property values, and even human health. These plants consume large amounts of water and impede flow.

SUPPORT full appropriation of Salt Cedar Control funding allowed by PL 109-320.

SUPPORT federal funding of:

- \$5M to Corps' Aquatic Plant Control Research Program
- \$5M to Corps' Aquatic Plant Control cost share
- \$2M to Corps for innovative strategies and research on nonindigenous aquatic plant problems

SUPPORT full funding of Noxious Weed Control & Eradication Act of 2004.



BRACKISH GROUNDWATER & SEAWATER DESALINATION

Demand for water in Texas is fast outstripping supply: as early as 2010, available water supplies will no longer be sufficient to meet the increasing demand, according to State Water Plan projections. Brackish groundwater and seawater desalination are viable alternatives. Additional funding would allow design and construction of desalination facilities along the Gulf Coast to begin by 2008.

SUPPORT capital funding and operations (e.g., power subsidies) for developing new drought-proof water supplies by means of brackish and seawater desalination.

SUPPORT continued federal funding for research for brackish and seawater desalination technologies.

WATER CONSERVATION

Increases in population and debates over new water resources make efficiency of water use a necessary measure, both financially and environmentally. Agricultural water conservation initiatives have the potential for stretching our finite water resources to help meet urban water development needs while keeping our agricultural economy viable. EPA programs focused on urban water use such as the Alliance for Water Efficiency, Water Sense, and the State Revolving Fund can improve water efficiency and use. Agricultural water conservation programs under the Bureau of Reclamation and the Farm Bill are important to Texas.

SUPPORT increased funding to EPA for:

- Alliance for Water Efficiency
- Water Sense Program
- State Revolving Funds

SUPPORT Bureau of Reclamation special project funding for agricultural water conservation projects.

SUPPORT Texas Agriculture Water Conservation Demonstration Initiative of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2007.

SUPPORT USDA EQIP funding for water quality and water conservation projects.



WATER REUSE

The 2007 Texas State Water Plan proposes water reuse as a means of providing 15 percent of new water supplies to meet future needs. This important water management strategy is critical to the economic development of Texas and our nation. Given the recurring drought conditions experienced by the state, water reuse can function as a dependable strategy to meet our water needs. However, further scientific and technological developments are needed if we are to maximize the application of water reuse in an affordable manner.

SUPPORT increased federal funding for:

- Title 16 Program
- EPA Research Grant Program
- State Revolving Funds

Increased funding is needed to support the further development of reuse water strategies as an important and critical water management strategy in Texas.



EMINENT DOMAIN & WATER DISTRICTS

Impairing or preventing the proper exercise of eminent domain for public water projects, such as reservoir and other water supply and flood control projects, can have a detrimental effect on the development of much needed infrastructure. These infrastructures help to deliver essential, adequate water supplies for a rapidly expanding population and to shield that population from flooding.

PROTECT water districts' ability to exercise eminent domain for water and wastewater infrastructure projects that Texas must have to continue to grow and remain competitive.