



# TEXAS WATER DAY 2008

Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2008

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EXTRA

## Priority Water Issues For Texas

### TEIP & WRDA FUNDING

**BACKGROUND:** Texas faces water shortages that are among the most severe in the nation. Recognizing the potential for adverse impacts to the state, Texas state and local governments committed considerable time and millions of dollars to project water needs across the state and develop comprehensive strategies for adequately managing these needs. *Water for Texas 2007* (the latest version of the State Water Plan) has been thoughtfully developed by regional water planning groups at the grassroots level. **The comprehensive plan for meeting Texas future water needs identifies an investment in new water supply totaling \$30.7 billion in capital costs.**

Texas is looking to the **Water Resources Development Act**, recently reauthorized by Congress, for help, especially the **Texas Environmental Infrastructure Program (TEIP)**, which

**SUPPORT** funding of critical Texas water projects authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. Most Important for Texas is appropriation of the full \$40 million authorized for the Texas Environmental Infrastructure Program (Section 5138).

provides a framework for federal partnering with state and local entities to implement water projects identified in the Texas Water Plan. However, the benefits of WRDA will not be realized unless appropriations follow. The Texas Water Conservation Association, with members representing both

state and local partners, urges Congress to appropriate full funding of the \$40 million authorized for the TEIP

**Section 5138 establishing TEIP** is a major step forward for the future of Texas water. TEIP will provide an appropriate federal support for implementing water projects identified in the State Water Plan as well as an opportunity for federal partnerships in rural and other areas of Texas that may not have an established association or partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers but that face major issues with deteriorating infrastructure.



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### U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY FUNDING

Data provided by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) streamgages are critical for planning and managing Texas water resource issues and 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.

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# Other Statewide Water Issues for Texas

## FEMA FUNDING FOR FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT AND DAM & LEVEE SAFETY

Historically, floods are the most frequent, destructive, and costly natural hazard facing Texas, constituting 90 percent of total damage from all disasters. From 1975 to 1998, Texas recorded \$10.2 billion in property damage from floods alone. Texas' population is projected to grow by almost 60 percent by the year 2030. Today, the state faces the challenges of high flood losses, an increasing risk of flooding events, and rapid population growth that is putting more people and property in harm's way.

**SUPPORT S.1938**, Flood Mapping Act of 2007 to protect the National Flood Insurance Program and fund Map Modernization at \$400 million per year.

**SUPPORT H.R.3224**, National Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2007 to authorize \$200 million in grant assistance to fix failing non-federal dams posing risks to the public.

**SUPPORT reauthorization** of the NRCS Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL 83-566), Small Dams Rehabilitation Program at \$50 million per year for four years.

**SUPPORT funding of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007**, Title IX authorizing a National Levee Safety Program.



## CONTROLLING INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS

The spread of invasive aquatic plants is creating serious problems for Texas water bodies and the people who depend on them. These plants significantly reduce available water supplies, choke waterways, interfere with power generation and agricultural irrigation, degrade water quality, and have contributed to some drowning deaths. They make boat travel and recreation dangerous, while threatening the health of native plants and animals that keep Texas unique.

Federal help is needed to address problems caused by invasive plant species through (1) financial assistance with operational control of existing problems and (2) technical assistance in developing and implementing scientifically sound, ecosystem-based management strategies for restoring native plant communities in weed-infested water bodies.

**SUPPORT** funding of Corps of Engineers' aquatic plant control and research program.

**SUPPORT S.725**, National Aquatic Invasive Species Act of 2007.  
**SUPPORT & CO-SPONSOR H.R.260**, Aquatic Invasive Species Research Act.

**SUPPORT & CO-SPONSOR H.R.2643**, Interior Department Budget, Including programs under USGS.



## SUSTAINABLE WATER SUPPLIES

Water reuse, water conservation, and desalination of brackish groundwater, inland surface water, and seawater are three sustainable methods for enhancing water supplies. Federal assistance is needed to support efforts to expand the science and technology and implement projects.

**SUPPORT** streamlining of federal programs and increased federal funding for innovative and sustainable methods of enhancing water supplies, including reuse, conservation and desalination.

**SUPPORT** additional funding and broadening of BOR's Title XVI Program and agricultural water conservation projects.

**SUPPORT** additional funding for EPA's Research Grant Program, State Revolving Funds program, and Alliance for Water Efficiency.

**SUPPORT the SECURE Water Act (S.2156)** as a model for a comprehensive approach to sustainable water management.

**SUPPORT** capital funding for developing new drought-proof water supplies through seawater and brackish groundwater desalination.



## CLEAN WATER BONDS

There is a growing need for new investments in water supply and treatment facilities projects as well as rehabilitation of aging water infrastructure. Tax credit bonds can encourage private capital to assist in financing certain kinds of water related infrastructure, such as desalination, water recycling or groundwater clean-up facilities, without relying on congressionally appropriated dollars. Congress should embrace this opportunity to provide tax subsidies to finance innovative technologies that will provide substantial new sources of clean water.

**SUPPORT the Clean Renewable Water Supply Bond Act (H.R. 3452)** to allow a credit for clean renewable water supply bonds.



## EMINENT DOMAIN & WATER DISTRICTS

In June 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the right of state and local governments to exercise the power of eminent domain for economic development purposes. Many state legislatures have since passed new laws to clarify how local governments may use eminent domain for economic development. In 2007, federal legislation was filed addressing the issue. TWCA is concerned that this legislation may impair or prevent the proper exercise of eminent domain for public projects with secondary economic development impacts. Legislation limiting eminent domain must be carefully considered to ensure that unintended consequences do not hinder essential public projects to ensure adequate water supplies and control flooding.

**PRESERVE** the rights of state authorities to use eminent domain for water supply, wastewater, flood control, and drainage projects.

