Invitation for Public Comment on proposed Flood Planning Region Boundaries

To: Persons interested in Regional Flood Planning

The Texas Water Development Board (Board) invites public comment on its proposed flood planning region boundaries that would create 11 flood planning regions in Texas. Board designation of flood planning regions is required under Senate Bill 8, 86th Texas Legislature, which established a new regional and state flood planning process for the state.

The Board invites the public to review these proposed boundaries and provide specific comments regarding any suggestions for changes to the boundaries. In keeping with the bottom-up approach of Senate Bill 8 flood planning, the Board encourages interested parties to work together, to the extent practical, to present a consensus recommendation for any suggested flood planning region boundary changes. Please note that proposed rules related to the implementation of regional and state flood planning under Senate Bill 8 were posted in the December 20, 2019, Texas Register and are available for public comment.

The associated draft documents related to both this flood region boundary proposal and the proposed regional and state flood planning rules may be obtained:

- on the Internet at www.twdb.texas.gov
- by contacting Reem Zoun at 512-463-7847
- writing to Texas Water Development Board, P.O. Box 13231, Austin, Texas 78711-3231

Please submit any comments regarding proposed changes and the reasoning for such changes. These comments may be proved via email to public-comment@twdb.texas.gov or to Reem Zoun at the above address or by fax at 512-936-0889 by February 3, 2020.

Basis for the proposed flood planning region boundaries

In delineating the flood planning region boundaries, the Board started with the statutory language included in Senate Bill 8 which requires the flood planning regions to correspond with river basins. Texas’ 15 major river and 8 coastal basins have been previously delineated by the Board. The dividing lines of these basins follow watershed boundaries as defined by the United States Geological Survey.

In designating flood planning regions, Texas Water Code § 16.062 (b) allows the Board to divide river basins to avoid having an impractically large area for efficient planning in a flood planning region.
In developing these proposed flood planning regions, coastal basins were combined with adjacent major river basins based on the potential to be influenced by interbasin flooding, ongoing coastal management efforts, and the stream contribution to bays. Smaller river basins were combined with larger basins based on similar types of flooding, relatively small populations, and practical administrative constraints limiting the number of regions that can be adequately supported by the State.

County boundaries were not considered a factor in delineating flood planning region boundaries due to their incongruity with natural watershed boundaries.

In considering potential flood planning region boundaries, the Executive Administrator determined that there were not sufficiently obvious or beneficial demarcations for subdividing river basins and that the benefits of dividing river basins were outweighed by the drawbacks of the potential for discord between upstream and downstream stakeholders regarding negative effects on neighboring areas. Therefore, these proposed boundaries (below), while they do combine some basins, do not split any of the river basins.

As currently proposed, the rules for implementing the regional flood planning process allow regional flood planning groups to designate subgroups or subcommittees to address issues associated with a geographic area smaller than the full flood planning region. Such subgroups must include at least one voting member that represents each of the statutorily required interest categories. The proposed rule also requires that such subgroups or subcommittees bring any information or recommendations to the full regional flood planning group for consideration.