

# Texas Water Development Board

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**TO:** Board Members

**THROUGH:** Kevin Patteson, Executive Administrator *KP 11/8*  
John Steib, Chief Deputy Executive Administrator *JS 11/7*  
Les Trobman, General Counsel *LT*  
Rebecca Trevino, Chief Financial Officer *RT*  
David Carter, Agency Contract Administrator *DC*  
Dan Hardin, Interim Deputy Executive Administrator *DK for PH*  
Water Resources Planning and Information

**FROM:** Matt Nelson, Manager, Regional Water Planning *MN*

**DATE:** November 14, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Reimbursement of Travel Expenses for HB 4 Stakeholder Committee

## ACTION REQUESTED

Consider authorizing a) a transfer of funds, not to exceed \$45,000, from the Water Assistance Fund to the Research and Planning Fund, for reimbursement of travel expenses for the Stakeholder Committee of regional water planning group chairs and designees establishing uniform standards for prioritizing regional water plan projects; and b) execution of letter agreements with regional water planning group chairs and their designees for the purpose of reimbursement of related travel expenses.

## BACKGROUND

House Bill 4 (83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature) established a project prioritization process to be conducted by the regional water planning groups. As part of this process, House Bill 4 requires the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to create a Stakeholders Committee composed of regional water planning group chairs or their designees. This Committee must establish uniform standards to be used by the regional water planning groups in prioritizing projects in their regional plans. Because the voters approved Proposition 6 on the November 5, 2013 ballot, these uniform standards must be submitted to the TWDB for approval by December 1, 2013.

In carrying out their task, the Stakeholder Committee members have traveled to Austin and stayed overnight for meetings held on: October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>; November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>; November 13<sup>th</sup>

### Our Mission : Board Members

To provide leadership, planning, financial assistance, information, and education for the conservation and responsible development of water for Texas

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and 14<sup>th</sup>; and may have to travel again to complete their work. Thus far, the Stakeholder Committee members have not been reimbursed for these expenses.

To reimburse Stakeholder Committee members for their direct travel expenses, funds would have to be transferred from the Water Assistance Fund to the Research and Planning Fund. There are sufficient uncommitted FY14 Water Assistance Funds remaining to reimburse members for their travel related to developing uniform standards under HB 4.

The Stakeholder Committee members and designees are all voting members of the regional water planning groups. Based on a long-standing TWDB business decision, the 16 regional water planning contracts between TWDB and their political subdivisions do not allow planning group members to be reimbursed for hotel, food, airfare or car rental as part of their regular regional water planning activities. The only travel reimbursement that is allowed for regional water planning group members is for driving mileage at the state rate.

#### **KEY ISSUES**

If approved, TWDB will reimburse Stakeholder Committee members for travel mileage, hotel costs, airfare, car rental, and meal costs (at state rates) for a single chair or designee, per meeting. The reimbursed amounts would be limited to the maximum amounts authorized for state employees by the General Appropriations Act, Tex. Leg. Regular Session, 2011, Article IX, Part 5, as amended or superseded. Receipts for reimbursement would be required.

Based on estimated travel distances and tentative meeting dates, it is estimated that the total reimbursement amount for travel associated with development of uniform standards would not exceed \$45,000. This is based on an approximate cost of \$9,000 for a single overnight trip for 16 participants.

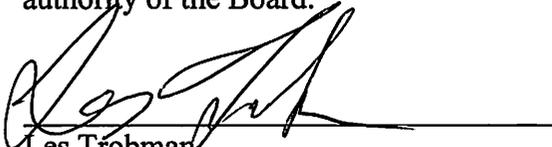
If this request is authorized, letter agreements with each of the chairs and designees relating only to travel costs associated with Stakeholder Committee meetings will be executed by the Executive Administrator. These letters of agreement will be separate agreements from the regional water planning contracts.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends authorizing a) a transfer of funds, not to exceed \$45,000, from the Water Assistance Fund to the Research and Planning Fund, for reimbursement of travel expenses for the Stakeholder Committee of regional water planning group chairs and designees establishing uniform standards for prioritizing regional water plan projects; and b) execution of letter agreements with regional water planning group chairs and their designees for the purpose of reimbursement of related travel expenses.

Board Members  
November 14, 2013  
Page 3

This recommendation has been reviewed by legal counsel and the action requested is within the authority of the Board.



Les Trobman  
General Counsel