

October 13, 2016

TO: ALL POTENTIALLY INTERESTED PARTIES:

RE: Lone Star Regional Water Authority (SWIFT Project No. 51011) – Acquisition of County Road 382 Property and Highway 95 Property

The attached document is being provided for your information. This is not a permit application. No action is being requested from your agency and no response is required.

The attached document is an environmental determination issued by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) for a proposed project to be funded through the TWDB. Pursuant to the environmental assessment requirements of 31 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 363, Subchapter A, the Executive Administrator of the TWDB has determined that the proposed action described in the attached documents may be exempted from formal environmental review requirements. A review by TWDB staff included a consideration of potential environmental impacts and permitting requirements. If there were any concerns about particular regulations or permits, the appropriate regulatory agency would have been contacted for clarification, and this would be described in the attached environmental determination.

Comments regarding this determination may be submitted to the Director of Regional Water Project Development, TWDB, P.O. Box 13231, Austin, Texas 78711-3231.

October 13, 2016

DETERMINATION OF NO EFFECT

TO ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS:

Pursuant to the environmental assessment requirements of 31 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 363.14 of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) rules, the Executive Administrator of the TWDB has determined that the proposed action identified below may be exempted from formal environmental review requirements:

Lone Star Regional Water Authority, Williamson County, Texas
East Williamson County Regional Water Transmission System
Acquisition of County Road 382 Property and Highway 95 Property
State Water Implementation Fund for Texas Project No. 51011
Total TWDB Commitment: \$27,640,000

Purpose and Need

The Lone Star Regional Water Authority (Authority) serves water to a number of residential, commercial, and institutional water customers throughout its service area, on a wholesale basis, providing potable water to approximately 8,200 residents. By 2040, the service population is expected to rise to 34,780 residents. A new, more reliable water source is needed to ensure an adequate supply now and in the future. The East Williamson County Regional Water Transmission System project is a recommended water management strategy in the 2011 Region G Regional Water Plan to meet future water needs for multiple water user groups for northern Williamson and southern Bell Counties. At this time, the Authority is only seeking to purchase two properties associated with the project. A subsequent environmental review for the release of design and construction funds will be required.

Most of the potable water used in northern Williamson and southern Bell Counties bordering Interstate-35 is supplied by Edwards Aquifer wells. The wells within this region of the Edwards Aquifer are affected by low aquifer levels during drought conditions and several have high fluoride levels. The groundwater issues, along with a growing population along the Interstate-35 corridor, have led to a need for an alternative water supply source. The Authority has investigated several options, including connecting to other water providers within the area, however only the Brazos River Authority (BRA) has sufficient capacity to offer. Central Texas Water Supply Corporation has water distribution facilities in the area, but they have recently experienced drought conditions that limit their main supplies and are expanding their groundwater supplies in an effort to develop a sustainable water supply for their existing customers. Jonah Special Utility District also has distribution facilities in Williamson County, but their system does not have the distribution capacity to transport the additional quantities of water needed. Therefore, in order to address these issues, the Authority is proposing to construct a transmission pipeline to connect with BRA to allow for sufficient capacity.

Project Description

This project will utilize acquisition funds from the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas. The TWDB committed funds for the East Williamson County Regional Water Transmission System project on July 23, 2015, in the amount of \$27,640,000. Of this amount, \$386,000 was dedicated to land acquisition. The Authority closed the loan on December 2, 2015.

To address its demonstrated need for potable water, the Authority proposes to construct the East Williamson County Regional Water Transmission System to transport surface water treated at the BRA East Williamson County Regional Water System located near Lake Granger. BRA supplies treated water to several municipalities including Taylor and Hutto, through a 36-inch diameter pipeline leading westerly from the plant. The Authority is proposing to connect to the BRA pipeline near Circleville, north of Taylor on State Highway 95 and install a transmission pipeline through northern Williamson County near the City of Jarrell. The Authority is planning on installing a 24-inch diameter pipeline, two pump stations, two storage tanks, one standpipe, valves, meters, and all necessary appurtenances to transport the treated surface water to the regional customers. The Authority estimates that 23 miles of pipeline will be required for the main transmission line and eventually several smaller connecting pipelines to participating water users. The Authority is planning to over-size the transmission pipeline to support projected growth along the Interstate-35 Corridor.

The initial water users are expected to be: the City of Jarrell; Sonterra Municipal Utility District; Jarrell-Schwertner Water Supply Corporation; Bell-Milam-Falls Water Supply Corporation; CL&L Municipal Utility District; and Central Texas Water Supply Corporation. The City of Granger has expressed interest for use as an emergency water supply source and several other water users have indicated an interest in obtaining supplies at a later date.

Environmental Review

Environmental Data Resources Inc., on behalf of the Authority, conducted Phase I Environmental Site Assessments for the County Road 382 Property¹ and the Highway 95 Property² consistent with the requirements of American Society for Testing and Materials International Standard E1527-13. The review did not reveal evidence of recognized environmental conditions in connection with the properties.

According to a review conducted by TWDB staff, purchasing the County Road 382 Property and the Highway 95 Property is not likely to impact any significant or potentially significant cultural resources, wetlands or waters of the United States that are under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, or threatened or endangered species or habitat. Prior to the release of funding for design and construction, the Authority will satisfy environmental review

¹ Lone Star Regional Water Authority (July 5, 2016). Phase I Environmental Assessment – County Road 382 Property, 701 County Road 382 Bartlett, Texas 76511 (Prepared by Enviro Assessment P.C. Bonners Ferry Idaho). Received by TWDB on July 05, 2016.

² Lone Star Regional Water Authority (July 5, 2016). Phase I Environmental Assessment – Highway 95 Property, Highway 95 and County Road 366 (365), Taylor, Texas 76574 (Prepared by Enviro Assessment P.C. Bonners Ferry Idaho). Received by TWDB on July 05, 2016

requirements to ensure the project would not result in adverse impact on the quality of the human environment and protected natural resources.

Recommendation

This decision is allowed because the proposed acquisition of the pump station sites should not entail significant adverse impacts to the quality of the human environment. Documentation supporting this determination is on file at the TWDB.

This determination may be rescinded if it is found that:

- (1) because of changes in the project the proposed actions no longer correspond to the description provided above;
- (2) the project may have significant adverse environmental effects; or
- (3) Federal, State, or local laws are being or may be violated by implementation of this project.

The project must comply with the following conditions to ensure the long-term viability of this TWDB funded project, and that the project would not result in adverse impact on the quality of the human environment and protected natural resources:

- Prior to the release of design and construction funds, a full environmental review must be completed and the Executive Administrator must issue a favorable environmental determination consistent with applicable requirements of the funding program;
- Standard emergency condition for the discovery of cultural resources, and;
- Standard emergency condition for the discovery of threatened or endangered species.

Comments regarding this determination may be submitted to the Director, Regional Water Project Development, Texas Water Development Board, P.O. Box 13231, Austin, Texas 78711-3231.

