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**To:** <bill.roberts@twdb.state.tx.us>  
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**Subject:** The 2007 Draft State Water Plan Falls Short

Texas Water Development Board Members

I have concerns about the Draft 2007 State Water Plan. This update of the 2002 State Water Plan does not achieve a reasonable balance in meeting water needs at reasonable cost with protecting the natural heritage that belongs to all Texans.

The draft plan shortchanges inexpensive water conservation measures and overemphasizes expensive reservoirs. The 2007 State Water Plan should aggressively lead the way in water conservation--typically the least expensive and least environmentally damaging water supply. It does not acknowledge water savings from drought management measures, nor does it ensure adequate protection of the agricultural and natural resources of the state.

The water development projects included in the State Water Plan should only be the very best options that are necessary to meet the water needs of our growing population. Instead, the \$31 billion dollar plan includes an overly exhaustive list of damaging water development projects that would result in a large-scale oversupply of water in more than half of the sixteen water planning regions.\*

In fact, for some regions, the recommended water development projects would result in providing more than double or triple the amount of water that is projected to be needed. In addition to the oversupply issue, many of these costly projects could be avoided through more efficient use of existing supplies--typically the cheapest supply. For example, the State Plan fails to include strong water conservation measures for most user groups in Region C, the Dallas/Ft. Worth region, and calls for four massive new reservoirs costing over \$3.3 billion--even though enough water to meet all projected needs is available without these, even in the absence of aggressive water conservation measures. And this is in a region with some of the highest municipal water rates in the state.

In times when money is scarce and rivers are being depleted, we simply can't afford this "never enough" approach. The financial costs of doing so are too high, as are the costs to Texas landowners and to the economy activities that rely on our aquifers, rivers, and bays and the wildlife they support. This costly over-planning represents a failure in meeting the legislative directives for the planning process.

As you move forward in finalizing the Draft 2007 State Water Plan, I urge you to revisit the vision of water planning, as well as the consequences of planning in a way that drains our state of its finances and natural heritage. We can provide for the water needs of our growing population in a fiscally responsible way while also protecting the environment, but to do so, we must go about water planning in a more conservative and deliberate fashion. Thank you for your careful consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

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