

From: <wassenich@grandecom.net>
To: <bill.roberts@twdb.state.tx.us>
Date: 10/5/2006 8:14:56 AM
Subject: Problems with the Draft 2007 State Water Plan

Members of the Texas Water Development Board
P.O. Box 13231
Austin, TX 78711-3231

Dear Members of the Texas Water Development Board,

Once again, I can see that this is not a grassroots water plan, it is one dominated by those who wish to sell water, since those are the major players dominating the makeup of Water Planning Boards in each region. Texas' natural heritage of healthy rivers and bays is not being protected for future generations, and water conservation is not practiced all over the state. Instead, expensive and damaging water projects are proposed in this plan, in many regions, without considering how they will impact rivers and bays, wildlife, and all the people whose lives and jobs depend on healthy waterways.

I am writing to register my concerns about the Draft 2007 State Water Plan with the Texas Water Development Board. After this five year effort to update the 2002 Plan, I am disappointed not to see more progress in moving Texas toward striking an appropriate balance in meeting water needs at a reasonable cost while also protecting our natural heritage.

The Plan falls short of its charge as stated in the first paragraph of chapter one. It doesn't provide for aggressive water conservation, it doesn't factor in savings from drought management, it doesn't protect our agricultural and natural resources, and it doesn't meet water needs at a reasonable cost.

As the blueprint for how to meet water needs for the next 50 years, the Plan should aggressively lead the way in water conservation--typically the least expensive and least environmentally damaging supply. The Plan still falls far short of realizing anywhere near the full potential of this water supply strategy, and therefore relies too heavily on reservoirs and other new projects.

This continued reliance on more infrastructure before water conservation has been fully exploited puts an unjustifiable strain on our natural resources and pocketbooks, and fails to meet the objectives of the water planning process.

I am also profoundly opposed to your recommendation to the Legislature to designate a large number of unique reservoir sites. The implications of reservoir construction at those sites and to property owners in the areas proposed have not been

adequately considered.

It is astonishing that the Plan doesn't even calculate the water savings nor the cost savings possible by using drought management measures. Instead, the Plan calls for building more reservoirs and other projects that would only be needed to supply water for non-essential uses during a severe drought. This failure to employ drought management results in unacceptable costs, damage to our natural heritage, and a Plan that does not meet the statutory criteria for the water planning process.

The water development projects in the Plan should only be the very best options to meet our water needs. Instead, the \$31 billion dollar plan is an exhaustive list of projects, resulting in large-scale oversupply of water. For some regions, the recommended projects would result in more than double or triple the amount of water that is needed. We simply can't afford this "never enough" approach. The financial cost is too high, as are the costs to the economic activities that rely on healthy aquifers, rivers, and bays. In addition, this costly over-planning is a failure to meet the legislative directives for the planning process.

As you finalize the 2007 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 plan in a more conservative and deliberate fashion. Thank you for your careful consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Dianne Wassenich
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