

From: " Adrian F. Van Dellen, DVM" <naturmate@earthlink.net>
To: <bill.roberts@twdb.state.tx.us>
Date: 10/5/2006 10:21:30 PM
Subject: Comment on 2007 State Water Plan

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Please find attached my letter of comments on the 2007 State Water Plan.

Thanks for the opportunity to respond to the Plan.

Sincerely Yours,
Adrian

Adrian F, Van Dellen

PS: I sent today a hard copy in the US Post. Avd

Mr. Bill Roberts
Texas Water Development Board
for East Texas Region I
1700 North Congress
PO Box 13231, Austin, TX 78711-3231

5 October 2006

Dear Mr. Roberts and other members of the Board,

I'm pleased and appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft, Texas 2007 State Water Plan. The Legislature's intent to acquire a broad-based consensus-driven Plan, however flawed it may be in practice, is still the best process there is in water planning. Herewith, in part, it is being fulfilled, for I am at "the grass roots." Living on the outskirts of Woodville, a rural resident of East Texas, Region I, and well into a second career in outdoor, nature photography, I believe I am a true representative voice of our region and its people. Your professional and diligent work is evident in producing and providing the Plan.

There is a lot in the Plan that is good and well done to develop and assure a sufficient water supply; for example, advocating groundwater conservation districts and municipal conservation programs (as far as they go!), to name just a few. However, I will dwell for the sake of brevity on my perception of its more important shortcomings.

You have kept and expanded to a costly \$30+ Billion, dam-building projects as the foremost water supply strategy in the Plan. It appears you and the Board may not be listening to, or cannot hear the loud voices of the people of our region, as there is an overwhelming, clear consensus that these costly projects are not needed nor wanted. It is particularly insulting to the many of us who have spoken clearly in opposition to the building of Fastrill dam/reservoir, for instance, one of the more outrageous alternate water supply strategies. Yet, there it is in the plan, despite the fact that Region C (the Dallas metroplex) would have 80% rights to the water and cannot show a reasonable need for it -- even as far out as 2060! And, most senseless, it would drown a National Wildlife Refuge, which is instead desired by a large and vast majority of East Texans. It is unconscionable that a continuing attempt to built Fastrill remains in the Plan, not least because the Metroplex has one of the highest per capita water usages in the State, but a scant conservation plan. It puzzles me that the Board may be accommodating obviously selfish Region C at the expense of foolish Region I!

We do not need a Rockland dam either, or most of the planned reservoirs for East Texas, as alleged real and demonstrable need is dubious. I'm confident you could do better. Or, is it impossible -- because the Board is handicapped with biased and inadequate representation? I understand it to be implicit in your mandate that you are to reflect the will of the people, to safeguard all their interests in water, to include the environment, and to assure a public water supply, but it may not be happening!

Indeed, PUBLIC water supply! But the Plan seems to be geared to smooth the way and privatize all, to eventually turn the public's surface water into a commodity. It's not unlikely that the citizens of Texas may ultimately have to pay for all the water they rightfully already own,

and might not in the future even be able to legally collect rainwater off their own roofs, as has already happened in another part of the world. The Board seems to be accommodating, unwittingly or not, the future use of our water outside of our region, a most (perhaps) sinister development of the *Water Development Board*. Was all this premeditated when *Development* was emphasized in its moniker?

A particular ominous note is your legislative proposal to allow exemption to the interbasin transfer of water in connection with the junior water rights provision of contract water. It is the linchpin; allowing water of junior (as well as un-permitted?) water rights to be conveyed to other regions and beyond. The modern (water) barons are surely salivating! **It should be withdrawn!**

Any expansion of interbasin transfer of water is biologically *unsound* in relation to respective bays, estuaries, and all habitats of the native basin, strategically unwise considering firm water yield of reservoirs, and economically disastrous for East Texas.

Not coincidentally, I am convinced, the river authorities are evidently complicit in the interbasin water transfer scheme and the export of water. For example, LNVA, owner of Sam Rayburn Reservoir water rights, has a \$55+ million dollar grand from the Board to build new pipelines and expand the water conduits facilitating interbasin water transfers. And there is the current attempt to establish new entities to help export our water, again, specifically, from Sam Rayburn Reservoir; reference the notice of petition (obscured in the classified section!) of the Lufkin daily paper, dated 9/16/06. Perhaps connected, but surely not unnoticed by the water barons is the rapidly shrinking world's fresh water supply relative to an explosive world population, and the world grain supply (also shrinking) necessary to feed the expanding masses. There can be no doubt, there will be pressure the export water via grain when Texas' farmers responds to world market demand for grain, *a commodity* -- **it takes 1,000 tons of water to grow a ton of grain!**

Someone might say, then, "it's the commodities, stupid! Is East Texas water that sustains all aspects of our people, their commerce etc., and the environment, being but on the chopping block by ostensible efforts to make it an international commodity, at least indirectly? Water, the ultimate and true staff of life, should not be a commodity in any way! Bottled water is bad enough!!

There's a lot of reference in the Plan to "drought of record," -- we are in one now; Tails Creek, outflow of a diminishing pool of water in Lake Jacksonville, is dry, and the farmers are rightfully up in arms -- but there is frightfully little in the Plan to address an effective, fair and equitable drought management plan. The apparent primary focus, advocating more reservoirs, is too costly when all relevant items are on the balance sheet. The Plan misses a great opportunity to **get it right**, to **apply modern, advanced and aggressive water supply means**, and in this, the Board may be missing its legislative mandate to plan for future droughts of record.

To summarize the above and to synopsise improvements to the Plan, we desperately need: more and better, really adequate conservation (it's cheap & secure!), large **desalination** plants (not "pilot" projects; it's **not, relatively**, expensive; technology is already available!), **expanded water reuse**, including closed-system water use, **stratified water pricing**, and all other means of

better using the existing water supply *before we needlessly spend huge sums of money to build more reservoirs.*

Furthermore, an honest and balanced consideration of all water supply and demand should be made. Please! Do not foolishly send more water out of East Texas, as it would further aggravate a drought, depress reservoir levels and limit their originally intended use – including recreation.

Keep **Our Water** in East Texas! – here, to sustain our citizens and the natural environment with which our region is so richly blessed, to grow jobs here, and to meet the many needs of water for people and the environment of East Texas – our quality and basic needs of life depend on it.

Sincerely,

Adrian

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Cc: file

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