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To: <bill.roberts@twdb.state.tx.us>
Date: 10/6/2006 4:35:12 PM
Subject: Region I water plan

Dear Mr. Roberts:

Please accept my comments on the regional planning for water in Region I. I have not participated in your recent meetings because of being out of state, but I am keenly interested in helping to make sure that we wisely plan and use the very important water resources of our state. I served on the Lufkin City Council for 7 years and am also very concerned what will happen to the East Texas economy if we fail to adequately hold and wisely use the water resources for our future citizens. The points I want to cover are:

- * The region I plan must consider the instream flow needs for wildlife and fisheries as well as the recreational use of those streams and rivers. An example is; if we Dam the Neches River for water to be sent to Dallas then the restricted flows will be a great detriment to the Neches River bottomlands and the ecosystems there for wildlife and the Big Thicket Preserve.

- * Water use projections must be critically reviewed in light of real population increases rather than inflated chamber of commerce idealistic projections.

The Water Development Board needs to critically review these estimates.

- * Water conservation measures must be mandated for every community before any interbasin transfers can be requested by those communities. When San Antonio can use one-half of the water per capita that Dallas uses then Dallas should be required to reduce their consumption to a commensurate level before they could request water be transferred to their region from another.

- * The recreational uses that now occur on existing reservoirs must be assessed for economic benefit before any additional water volume could be removed.

When Toledo Bend and Sam Rayburn Reservoirs now drop to drought levels the businesses along those reservoirs are severely impacted or forced to close. If additional water is taken from these to supply other region's needs then there will be no business that will survive in the long term.

- * As I understand the statewide plan, it does not address the opportunity to use the Gulf of Mexico for desalination plants for providing water to Texans. This should be an important part of the overall statewide plan. The cost to produce potable water by this method should be more favorable than moving families out of new reservoir sites and the environmental cost from losing the bottomland ecosystems.

- * Citizen's comments about the flaws and benefits of your water plans should be considered more important than they now are by the board(s). When debate is stifled, limited or otherwise restricted, as has happened in recent meetings, then the whole process is a sham and the citizens have no confidence in the government that is supposed to serve them.

Thanks for the opportunity to address these issues.

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