

**Yarbrough Bros. Ranch**  
**Michael & John Yarbrough**  
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October 3, 2006

Bill Roberts  
Texas Water Development Board  
P. O. Box 13231  
Austin, TX 78711-3231

Dear Sir:

Please include the following statement in the public comment section of the Water for Texas 2007 State Water Plan.

My brother and I have been ranching since 1984 full time and we have raised several large Simmental bulls that weighed over 2000 pounds. That is a lot of bull but not even close to the bull that is in the draft 2007 State Water Plan. The numbers of acre feet needed (actually wanted is a better term), the population growth and the amount of water currently available are not consistent within the plan and seem to me to be pure speculation and guess work. It is true that the population is growing and that more water will be needed but this plan does not take the problem seriously. It recommends a temporary band-aid approach to an ever present and ever growing problem that will never be solved by simply building more reservoirs. If you wish to tackle the problem, you must get serious and get into the business of supplying water and get out of the way of agriculture and quit attacking rural county tax bases.

The problem with supplying water is that the more fresh cheap water people have, the more they will use and waste it. People didn't use nearly as much water per capita per day back when they had to draw it up from the well or cistern or tote it in from the creek in a bucket. You will never have enough water for the population if it remains cheap and convenient. You will always have the poor who can't afford expensive water and they must be supplied as well. If residential water was priced at \$ 20.00 for the first 2000 gallons and \$ 5.00 /1000 gallons for the next 2000 gallons and \$ 50.00 / 1000 gallons for the next 2000 gallons and \$ 500.00/1000 gallons for the next 2000 gallons and so on, the problem of cheap and convenient water starts to disappear and yet poor people can still afford to keep the water turned on.


The next problem with supplying water is that it is not readily available everywhere. Weather patterns change and normally wet areas are in a drought and dry areas get flooded. Underground aquifers are difficult to predict as to their capacity, recharge rate and draw down rate. Why not go to the source of all water, why not get serious and go to the ocean and desalinate water? The oceans cover two thirds of the earth's surface and the technology to desalinate that water is on every US Navy ship and submarine. Pipelines could be built along the right of ways of major highways to carry raw water and to connect existing lakes and municipal water suppliers as well as a network of wells along the way. Secondly, why not form a state water grid to move water to the areas that need it and from the areas that have too much; the same way that electricity is moved on a grid in Texas?

The next problem with supplying water is that the Texas Water Development Board has inadvertently caused the 16 regions of the Texas Water Development Board to form an artificial river, creek and ditch land grab to build as many mud hole reservoirs as possible before someone <sup>else</sup> does. The real term for this action is GREED, especially by Region C. Water developers are forever in the face of agriculture, taking the best farm land available to build more mud hole lakes when two thirds of the earth is already covered with deep water and they want to take the land and not pay a fair market value as is supposedly required by the fifth amendment to the US constitution. Every reservoir built removes tax base from rural schools and counties which can least afford the loss and all the water is sold to cities that put nothing back into the rural areas and it is sold by quasi-governmental entities that do not pay taxes to either the cities or the rural areas. On top of this, reservoirs are the least dependable sources of water in times of drought and as the best reservoir sites have already been developed, the remaining sites are mostly shallow water reservoirs that are even less dependable water sources. US energy policy seems to be shifting to renewable sources and that will require all of the best farmland to be available for farming, not put underwater but more water will be needed to supply irrigation water. The current plan seems to be to take water rights from agriculture and to ask agriculture to conserve while the cities splurge. The answer to the problem of supplying water does not lie in the building of more costly shallow water reservoirs at the expense of agriculture and rural Texas.

The last problem I wish to address is the cost. The current draft plan calls for 14 new major and two minor reservoirs at who knows how many billion dollars and for 4500 water management strategies costing \$ 30.7 billion and states that water shortages could cost as much as \$ 98.4 billion by 2060 but that is not nearly all the cost. That is only the monetary cost to the state government and does not include the loss of homes, farms, ranches, inheritances, lives and jobs of those Texans who are cast out of their dreams and life's work and off their land so that more mud hole lakes can be built. The plans costs do not include the lost agricultural production, the loss of the wildlife and scenery of rural Texas, the loss of family inheritances and ways of life for many Texans and the loss of more land area than several counties in Texas to lakes that are not recreational or fishing lakes but mud hole reservoirs.

In summary, I ask that you remove all new reservoirs from the state plan and concentrate your efforts and money in the desalination of ocean water and the construction of a state water grid to distribute the water. Require conservation by making water valuable and improve the capacity of existing reservoirs by dredging and dig wells all along pipelines to add extra water without over pumping any one area. Get out of the face of agriculture and rural Texas and get really serious about supplying water by tapping the big lake, the ocean in a really big, serious way. It will have to be done some time and we need to get started now.

Sincerely,



Michael Yarbrough



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