Planning Water Resources for the State as a Whole Committee Report to the Interregional Planning Council – August 12, 2020

1. **Proposed Changes to Committee Problem and Goal Statement:** No changes proposed at this time.

2. **Draft Recommendation Summaries**

   **Recommendation 1:** The regional water planning process should include long range and visionary planning

   a. **Brief Observation:** The current regional water planning process does not sufficiently facilitate or encourage identification and inclusion of multi-regional projects. The focus on drought of record, sponsorship of projects, and project cost does not facilitate the consideration of inter-regional and statewide water planning projects.

   b. **Succinct Recommendations:**

      i. The TWDB should:

         1. Revise Texas Administrative Code Chapters 357 and 358 as appropriate, and include a new, specific task in the regional water planning group’s contracted scope of work to authorize:

            a. Long-range, visionary planning effort, beyond current 50-year planning horizon, to identify projected statewide water needs (potential water shortages) and multi-regional projects to address these needs;

            b. Long-range, visionary planning to consider longer-term droughts greater than recorded drought of record (e.g., mega-droughts); and

            c. Evaluation of identified feasible projects without limitation of sponsorship or costs.

         2. Utilize RWPG chairs conference calls to consider multi-regional projects.

      ii. The Legislature should support multi-regional and statewide projects developed from long-range, visionary planning by

         1. Returning to providing initial sponsorship of projects without guarantees from local sponsors;

         2. Providing financial incentives for local sponsorship; and

         3. Providing additional funding for the regional water planning process to accommodate tasks associated with long range, visionary planning.

         4. Utilizing state agencies to develop a state level vision of planning resources for the state as a whole;
5. Establishing a process for coordination amongst state agencies related to installation of infrastructure during planning and construction of large-scale projects;

   iii. The RWPGs should find new ways to meet and collaborate with other RWPGs early in the planning process to identify and develop opportunities for multi-regional projects within the current regional planning framework and requirements. This could be established in the form of a new scope of work planning task and chapter.

   iv. Future Interregional Planning Councils should consider whether the Interregional Planning Council or RWPGs are the appropriate mechanism for planning for water resources for the state as a whole.

   a. **Brief Benefit**: The Legislature should establish a state perspective for planning resources in conjunction with long range planning done at the regional level. Multi-regional and visionary planning beyond region-centric and a 50-year horizon and recorded drought of record would aggregate and identify larger water needs not addressed currently by regional water planning groups. It is anticipated that large-scale projects would require multiple sponsors and/or state sponsorships. Such projects may be considered feasible with greater state financial incentives such as subsidies or state participation or state partnership in projects.

3. **Draft Recommendations Under Further Consideration (yet to be fully developed)**: None