

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