

Senate Bill 1  
South Central Texas RWPG  
Staff Workgroup Meeting  
August 19, 2015 9:00 am at  
San Antonio River Authority  
100 East Guenther St.  
San Antonio, TX, 78204

1. Status of Technical Consultants Work and Schedule
2. Discussion regarding TWDB comments on the Region L 2016 Initially Prepared Plan
3. Discussion regarding TPWD comments on the Region L 2016 Initially Prepared Plan
4. Discussion regarding public comments on the Region L 2016 Initially Prepared Plan
5. Review Draft Agenda for the September 3, 2015, Planning Group Meeting
6. Any Additional Items for Consideration

# Texas Water Development Board

P.O. Box 13231, 1700 N. Congress Ave.  
Austin, TX 78711-3231, [www.twdb.texas.gov](http://www.twdb.texas.gov)  
Phone (512) 463-7847, Fax (512) 475-2053

July 21, 2015

Mr. Con Mims, Chair  
c/o Nueces River Authority  
200 E. Nopal, Suite 206  
Uvalde, Texas 78802

Mr. Cole Ruiz  
San Antonio River Authority  
100 E. Guenther Street  
San Antonio, Texas 78283

Re: Texas Water Development Board Comments on the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group (Region L) Initially Prepared Plan, Contract No. 1148301323

Dear Mr. Mims and Mr. Ruiz:

Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) staff completed a review of the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) submitted by May 1, 2015 on behalf of the Region L Regional Water Planning Group. The attached comments follow this format:

- **Level 1:** Comments, questions, and online regional water planning database revisions that must be satisfactorily addressed in order to meet statutory, agency rule, and/or contract requirements; and,
- **Level 2:** Comments and suggestions for consideration that may improve the readability and overall understanding of the regional water plan.

The TWDB's statutory requirement for review of potential interregional conflicts under Title 31 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §357.62 will not be completed until submittal and review of adopted regional water plans. However, as previously requested by our Executive Administrator, please inform TWDB in advance of your final plan if your planning group believes that an interregional conflict exists. Additionally, subsequent review will be performed as the planning group completes its data entry into the regional water planning database (DB17). If issues arise during our ongoing data review, they will be communicated promptly to the planning group to resolve.

Our Mission : Board Members  
To provide leadership, information, education, and :  
support for planning, financial assistance, and :  
outreach for the conservation and responsible :  
development of water for Texas :  
Bech Bruun, Chairman | Carlos Rubinstein, Member | Kathleen Jackson, Member  
Kevin Patteson, Executive Administrator

Title 31 TAC§357.50(d) requires the regional water planning group to consider timely agency and public comment. Section 357.50(e) requires the final adopted plan include summaries of all timely written and oral comments received, along with a response explaining any resulting revisions or why changes are not warranted. Copies of TWDB's Level 1 and 2 written comments and the region's responses must be included in the final, adopted regional water plan. While the comments included in this letter represent TWDB's review to date, please anticipate the need to respond to additional comments regarding data integrity, including any water source overallocations, in the regional water planning database (DB17) once data entry is completed by the region.

Standard to all planning groups is the need to include certain content in the final regional water plans that was not yet available at the time that IPPs were prepared and submitted. In your final regional water plan, however please be sure to also incorporate the following:

- a) Completed results from the regional planning group's infrastructure financing survey (IFR) for sponsors of recommended projects with capital costs [31 TAC §357.44];
- b) Completed results from the implementation survey [31 TAC §357.45(a)];
- c) The socioeconomic impact evaluation provided by TWDB at the request of the planning group [31 TAC §357.33(c)];
- d) Documentation that comments received on the IPP were considered in the development of the final plan [31 TAC §357.50(d)];
- e) Evidence, such as a certification, that the final, adopted regional water plan is complete and adopted by the planning group [31 TAC §357.50(j)(1)]; and,
- f) The required DB17 reports, as made available by TWDB, in the executive summary or elsewhere in the plan as specified in the Contract [31 TAC §357.50(e)(2)(B), *Contract Scope of Work Task 4D(p), Contract Exhibit 'C', Table 2*]. Please ensure that the numerical values presented in the tables throughout the final, adopted regional water plan are consistent with the data provided in DB17. For the purpose of development of the 2017 State Water Plan, water management strategy and other data entered by the regional water group in DB17 (and as presented in the regional plan) shall take precedence over any conflicting data presented in the final regional water plan [*Contract Exhibit 'C', Sections 12.1.3. and 12.2.2*].

The following items must accompany, separately, the submission of the final, adopted regional water plan:

- The prioritized list of all recommended projects in the regional water plan [*Texas Water Code 15.436(a), Contract Scope of Work Task 13*]; and,
- Any remaining hydrologic modeling files or GIS files that may not have been provided at the time of the submission of the IPP but that were used in developing the final plan. [31 TAC §357.50(e)(2)(C), *Contract Exhibit 'C', Section 12.2.1; Contract Scope of Work Task 3-III-13*]

Note that provision of certain content in an electronic-only form is permissible as follows: Internet links are permissible as a method for including model conservation and drought contingency plans within the final regional water plan; hydrologic modeling files may be submitted as electronic appendices, however

Mr. Con Mims  
Mr. Cole Ruiz  
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all other regional water plan appendices should be incorporated in hard copy format within each plan [31 TAC §357.50(e)(2)(C), Contract Scope of Work Task 5e, Contract Exhibit 'C', Section 12.2.1].

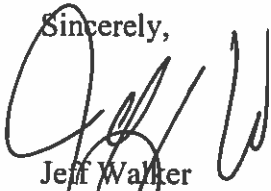
The following general requirements that apply to recommended water management strategies must be adhered to in all final regional water plans including:

- Regional water plans must not include any strategies or costs that are associated with simply maintaining existing water supplies or replacing existing infrastructure. Plans may include only infrastructure costs that are associated with volumetric increases of treated water supplies delivered to water user groups or that result in more efficient use of existing supplies [31 TAC §357.10(28), §357.34(d)(3)(A), Contract Exhibit 'C', Section 5.1.2.2, Section 5.1.2.3]; and,
- Regional water plans must not include any retail distribution-level infrastructure costs (other than those costs related to conservation strategies such as water loss reduction) [31 TAC §357.10(28), §357.34(d)(3)(A), Contract Exhibit 'C', Section 5.1.2.3].

To facilitate efficient and timely completion, and Board approval, of your final regional water plan, please provide your TWDB project manager with early drafts of your responses to these IPP comments for preliminary review and feedback.

If you have any questions regarding these comments or would like to discuss your approach to addressing any of these comments, please do not hesitate to contact Temple McKinnon at (512) 475-2057. TWDB staff will be available to assist you in any way possible to ensure successful completion of your final regional water plan.

Sincerely,



Jeff Walker  
Deputy Executive Administrator  
Water Supply and Infrastructure

Attachments

cc w/att: Mr. Sam Vaughn, HDR, Inc.

**TWDB Comments on the Initially Prepared 2016 South Central Texas  
(Region L) Regional Water Plan**

**Level 1: Comments and questions must be satisfactorily addressed in order to meet statutory, agency rule, and/or contract requirements.**

1. Tables 2-10 through 2-17: It is not clear whether the information provided in the tables referenced presents the current contractual obligations of wholesale water providers (WWPs) in the region. Please confirm in the final, adopted regional water plan. *[31 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §357.31(c)]*
2. The plan in some instances, does not appear to include a quantitative reporting of impacts to agricultural resources. For example, strategy evaluations 5.2.9, 5.2.11, 5.2.14, 5.2.21, 5.2.23-27, 5.2.34, 5.2.35, and 5.2.37 do not appear to include quantified impacts to agricultural resources. Please include quantitative reporting of impacts to agricultural resources, including when there is no impact, in the final, adopted regional water plan. *[31 TAC §357.34 (d)(3)(C)]*
3. Pages 5.3-18, 5.3-23, and 5.3-90: The plan does not appear to include conservation practices for all water user groups to which Texas Water Code (TWC) §11.1271 and §13.146 apply. For example, the City of Kirby and East Central SUD and Green Valley SUD to which these Water Code requirements apply. Please address this requirement in the final, adopted regional water plan. *[31 TAC §357.34(f)(2)(A)]*
4. Volume II, Section 5.2.3: The Facilities Expansion Water Management Strategy appears, in some cases, to include infrastructure components that do not appear to increase the supply to end users. For example, the Port O'Connor treatment and distribution system improvements. Water management strategy components included in regional water plans must be limited to the infrastructure required to develop and convey increased water supplies from sources and to treat the water for end user requirements. Maintenance of existing equipment or wells or improvements to treatment processes shall not be included as a recommended strategy with capital costs. Please remove these strategies and costs from the final, adopted regional water plan. *[Contract Exhibit 'C', Sections 5.1.2.2 and 5.1.2.3]*
5. Volume II, Sections 5.2.35 and 5.2.40: Please clarify in the plan whether the evaluations of water management strategies for "GBRA Lower Basin Storage" and "Lavaca River - OCR "are based on an unmodified Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) WAM Run 3 in the final, adopted regional water plan. If not, please evaluate these strategies using an unmodified TCEQ WAM Run3 for the final, adopted regional water plan. *[Contract Exhibit 'C', Section 3.4.2]*
6. Chapter 7: The plan does not appear to summarize information on existing emergency interconnections. Please indicate whether any local drought contingency plans involve making emergency connections between water systems or WWP systems and, if so, please also provide a general description in the final, adopted regional water plan. *[31 TAC §357.42(e)]*

7. Section 7.7: Please indicate how the planning group considered relevant recommendations from the Drought Preparedness Council (a letter was provided to planning groups with relevant recommendations in November 2014) in the final, adopted regional water plan. [31 TAC §357.42(h)]
8. Chapter 10: The plan does not include documentation regarding the public process during the development of regional water plan. Please clarify whether the regional water plan was developed in accordance with the public participation requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act in the final, adopted regional water plan. [31 TAC §357.21, §357.50(d)]
9. Please provide a statement regarding any water availability requirements promulgated by a county commissioners court pursuant to TWC §35.109, which in Region L applies to the northern Bexar County, Hays, Comal, and Kendall County Priority Groundwater Management Area. [31 TAC §357.22(a)(6)]
10. Please describe how the Texas Clean Rivers Program was considered in the final, adopted regional water plan. [31 TAC §357.22(a)(7)]
11. Please clarify whether the plan development was guided by the principal that the designated water quality and related water uses as shown in the state water quality management plan shall be improved or maintained. [31 TAC §358.3(19)]

<b>Level 2:      Comments and suggestions for consideration that may improve the readability and overall understanding of the regional water plan.</b>
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1. Please consider including a brief explanation of the differences between the 2011 and 2016 plans regarding surface water availability in the final, adopted regional water plan.
2. In the development of region-specific drought contingency plans, please consider including, at a minimum, triggers and responses for 'severe' and 'critical/emergency' drought conditions or indicate how these would be captured with the use of the recommended TCEQ templates in the final, adopted regional water plan.



August 07, 2015

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Fort Worth

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Carter P. Smith  
Executive Director

Steven J. Raabe  
Administrative Agent for Region L  
San Antonio River Authority  
P.O. Box 839980  
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3692

Re: 2016 South Central Texas Region L Initially Prepared Plan

Dear Mr Raabe,

Thank you for seeking review and comment from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department ("TPWD") on the 2016 Initially Prepared Regional Water Plan (IPP) for the South Central Texas Region L Water Planning Area (SCTRWPA). As you know, water impacts every aspect of TPWD's mission to manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas. As the agency charged with primary responsibility for protecting the state's fish and wildlife resources, TPWD is positioned to provide technical assistance during the water planning process. Although TPWD has limited regulatory authority over the use of state waters, TPWD is committed to working with stakeholders and others to provide science-based information during the water planning process intended to avoid or minimize impacts to state fish and wildlife resources.

TPWD understands that regional water planning groups are guided by 31 TAC §357 when preparing regional water plans. These water planning rules spell out requirements related to natural resource and environmental protection. Accordingly, TPWD staff reviewed the IPP with a focus on the following questions:

- Does the IPP include a quantitative reporting of environmental factors including the effects on environmental water needs and habitat?
- Does the IPP include a description of natural resources and threats to natural resources due to water quantity or quality problems?
- Does the IPP discuss how these threats will be addressed?
- Does the IPP describe how it is consistent with long-term protection of natural resources?
- Does the IPP include water conservation as a water management strategy?
- Does the IPP include Drought Contingency Plans?
- Does the IPP recommend any stream segments be nominated as ecologically unique?
- If the IPP includes strategies identified in the 2010 regional water plan, does it address concerns raised by TPWD in connection with the 2010 Water Plan.

The population of the 20 county SCTRWPA is estimated to grow from about 3.0 million in 2020 to about 5.2 million by 2070. Water needs are expected to more than double during this time period but water conservation, including drought management, and water reuse are expected to meet 34 percent of future water needs. In addition, the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) is identified as both an existing supply and a future water management strategy. Full implementation of the EAHCP provides future water supply while protecting springflows at Comal and San Marcos Springs, thereby protecting associated ecosystems and the federally threatened and endangered species that are found there. The IPP includes the development of two seawater desalination projects, comprising 23 percent of future supplies. Four new aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) projects are recommended in the IPP to provide approximately 9 percent of future supplies in the region. From the perspective of environmental impacts, ASR projects are generally preferred over surface reservoirs since habitat impacts can be minimized. Finally, new surface water development projects such as the GBRA Lower Basin Project are expected to meet 1 percent of future needs.

The IPP includes a detailed quantitative reporting of environmental factors. Volume II of the IPP discusses technical evaluations of strategies and presents water management strategy summary sheets that include acreages impacted by each strategy. An analysis of cumulative environmental impacts, as well as comparisons to cumulative impacts from past plans, is also included. Where applicable, newly adopted SB3 environmental flow standards are used to evaluate environmental flow requirements.

The IPP includes a description of natural resources including fish and wildlife resources. A detailed table listing threatened and endangered species by county with notations concerning their habitat preferences and protected status is presented in Appendix G of the IPP. Major springs are also described and potential threats to natural resources were evaluated. TPWD recommends including a discussion of aquatic exotic species including but not limited to tilapia and sailfin catfish.

Quantitative environmental assessments are presented for proposed water management strategies included in the 2016 IPP as well as for the 1984, 1990, 1997, 2002, 2007 and 2012 Water Plans. While necessarily broad in scope, this quantitative analysis comparing each water plan highlights some interesting trends. For example, while the overall environmental impact score for the 2016 IPP is in the midrange compared to previous water plans for the region, it has a higher potential to impact endangered, threatened, and species of concern due to the number of projects and pipelines traversing sensitive areas. The 2016 IPP is also projected to have less impact than previous plans on vegetation and wildlife habitat, largely due to the absence of large main-stem reservoirs included in earlier plans. Finally, the 2016 IPP appears to project moderate water quality and aquatic habitat impacts. Overall the 2016 IPP is projected to have slightly greater cumulative impacts than the 2012 plan for this region. While specific conclusions cannot be made at this point, TPWD staff tends to agree with the statement that the predicted impacts associated with the smaller (but more numerous) strategies in the 2016 IPP may be more easily avoided and/or mitigated than the large scale impacts associated with reservoirs in earlier water plans.

The SCTRWPG is to be commended for its strong emphasis on water conservation, reuse and drought contingency planning. The IPP includes municipal water conservation water management strategies. Water conservation in the industrial and steam-electric power generation use categories are encouraged as well. According to the IPP, per capita water use in Region L is projected to



decline over the planning period from 140 gallons per person per day in 2020 to 130 gallons per person per day in 2070, bringing it under the Texas Water Conservation Task Force goal of 140 gallons per person per day.

While TPWD is pleased to see that many of our earlier comments have been addressed, concerns remain regarding potential impacts associated with several strategies. Several water management strategies are recommended for stream segments identified by TPWD as ecologically significant. Increased groundwater development may impact small springs and adversely impact groundwater-surface water interactions. New appropriations from the Guadalupe River and/or increased use of previously unused water rights from the Guadalupe River will impact instream flows and freshwater inflows to San Antonio Bay that will likely reduce long-term inflows and increase bay salinities, potentially leading to complex estuarine community changes. Both seawater and brackish groundwater desalination can be ecologically advantageous strategies, as long as issues such as impingement and entrainment at intake locations and brine disposal options are carefully considered. Continued consultation with TPWD staff will help to ensure that fish and wildlife impacts can be avoided or minimized. Please be advised that HB 2031 passed by the 84<sup>th</sup> legislature requires consultation with TPWD and the General Land Office regarding siting of seawater desalination intakes and discharges.

The 2016 IPP is a well written and organized report. TPWD highly commends SCTRWPG's efforts that have resulted in the successful designation of five segments recommended in the IPP as ecologically unique. Recognition is deserved for drought management as a water management strategy, aquifer storage and recovery projects, seawater desalination, use of off-channel reservoirs, use of recycled water for non-potable uses for several water user groups, and an ecological analysis of the impact of the 2016 plan. No major on-channel reservoirs are proposed within the region at this time.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. TPW looks forward to continuing to work with the planning group to develop water supply strategies that not only meet the future water supply needs of the region but also preserve the ecological health of the region's aquatic resources. Please contact Cindy Loeffler at (512) 389-8715 if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Ross Melinchuk,  
Deputy Executive Director, Natural Resources

RM: CL:ms

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cc: Craig Bonds, Division Director, Inland Fisheries Division, TPWD  
Clayton Wolf, Division Director, Wildlife Division, TPWD  
Robin Riechers, Division Director, Coastal Fisheries Division, TPWD  
Norman Boyd, Coastal Fisheries Division, TPWD

**DRAFT**  
**NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING OF THE**  
**SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL**  
**WATER PLANNING GROUP**

TAKE NOTICE that a meeting of the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group as established by the Texas Water Development Board will be held on Thursday, September 3, 2015, at 9:30 a.m. at San Antonio Water System (SAWS), Customer Service Building, Room CR 145, 2800 US Highway 281 North, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The following subjects will be considered for discussion and/or action at said meeting.

1. Public Comment
2. Approval of Minutes from the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group's Meeting on February 5, 2015.
3. Approval of Minutes from the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group's Meeting on April 2, 2015.
4. Status of Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) – Nathan Pence, Executive Director EAHCP
5. Status of Guadalupe, San Antonio, Mission, and Aransas Rivers and Mission, Copano, Aransas, and San Antonio Bays Basin and Bay Stakeholder Committee (BBASC) and Expert Science Team (BBEST)
6. Chair's Report
7. Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Communications
8. Discussion and Appropriate Action Regarding Consultants Work and Schedule
9. Discussion and Appropriate Action Regarding the Process of Prioritizing 2016 Regional Water Plan Projects
10. Discussion and Appropriate Action Regarding Comments Submitted by Texas Water Development Board in Response to the 2016 Region L Initially Prepared Plan
11. Discussion and Appropriate Action Regarding Comments Submitted by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department in Response to the 2016 Region L Initially Prepared Plan

12. Report from the Public Comment and Plan Assessment Workgroup and Discussion and Appropriate Action Regarding the Public Comments Submitted in Response to the 2016 Region L Initially Prepared Plan
13. Discussion and Appropriate Action Regarding the Inclusion of the Cibolo Valley LGC Carrizo Project in the 2016 Regional Water Plan
14. Discussion and Appropriate Action Regarding the Alignment of Pipelines to Allow for the Export of Water to Region K, Consistent with the Position of the Hays County Commissioners Court
15. Possible Agenda Items for the Next South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group Meeting
16. Public Comment

The South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Area consists of Atascosa, Bexar, Caldwell, Calhoun, Comal, Dewitt, Dimmit, Frio, Goliad, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Karnes, Kendall, La Salle, Medina, Refugio, Uvalde, Victoria, Wilson, Zavala and part of Hays Counties.

Please visit [www.RegionLTexas.org](http://www.RegionLTexas.org) to review available chapters of the 2016 Initially Prepared Plan