

LCRA's Proposed Water Management Plan

During the Water Management Plan process when the Central Texas Water Coalition sat at the negotiating table as part of the 16-member committee (Lakes, Firm customers, Environmentalists, and Interruptible customers/rice industry), we achieved some improvements which we felt were better than the existing 2010 Water Management Plan. However, the latest version of the LCRA Water Management Plan (WMP), which the TCEQ released for public comment on April 15, 2013, still raises serious concerns.

CTWC drafted a list of concerns with the proposed WMP, which may be helpful with YOUR personal comments. NOW IS THE TIME to show the TCEQ the numbers of people in Central Texas and beyond who are opposed to the proposed LCRA WMP. CTWC will be submitting our official comments and requesting a hearing with TCEQ, and YOUR VOICE AND YOUR LETTERS TO THE TCEQ will help us be heard. PLEASE SEND TO ALL YOUR FRIENDS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO LIVE ELSEWHERE IN THE STATE, BUT HAVE HOMES OR BUSINESSES ON OUR LAKES!

Concerns and changes still needed:

- 1) Recent hydrology, including recent record drought years (2010, 2011, 2012), is not taken into account. Only data up to 2009 is considered. This is important because recent years' data indicates the average inflows have significantly decreased from what was assumed in the past
- 2) No clear and distinct provisions are made for lake recovery time. As evidenced by 2010, one good year of rainfall and recovery in the midst of a drought cycle can be wiped out by huge releases the following year. This is what happened in 2011. Without an appropriate recovery period, we could be perpetually in a state of water emergency.
- 3) Despite implementing emergency orders curtailing some interruptible customers two years in a row, the WMP is not protective enough of current firm customers. Even with the two Emergency Orders, we are facing a potential Drought Worse than Drought of Record (DWDOR) this summer, which evidences the serious failure of the WMP.
- 4) The WMP violates the firm customer protections provided for in the 1989 Adjudication Order. It does not sufficiently account for growth in firm water uses, and we are already in trouble with current demands. Senators Fraser and Watson have introduced legislation to help correct this, but it should be included in the WMP as well.
- 5) There is no true incentive for conservation by firm customers in Central Texas. Water saved through expensive conservation measures may then become available for use by downstream farmers paying a heavily discounted rate. Saved water does not benefit the saver, and the saved water may be wasted by another user. Failure to use annual supply can result in decreases in future supply, creating an incentive to waste water to avoid reduction in the future.
- 6) The WMP must use multi-year planning for managing multi-year drought cycles. Using a one-year approach rather than a multi-year is too risky. A more conservative assessment of future hydrology is needed.
- 7) Any customer that has a contract for "guaranteed" water (i.e.: Garwood Irrigation District) must be considered a firm water customer and pay the firm water rate.

8) Allowing the LCRA to wait until January 2020 to submit an application to revise this proposed WMP using updated hydrology and updated firm customer demands is far too long in view of the critical water management issues and horrible drought that we're facing today.

Conclusions:

Although there are some improvements in this proposed WMP, these improvements are not sufficient to assure that LCRA will provide a guaranteed water supply to the firm water customers in this current drought. With firm use growing and inflows declining, we will face chronically low reservoir lake levels that further endanger drinking water supplies. Chronically low levels do not benefit any of the interested parties; environmental, agricultural, municipal, industrial, or lake interests.

Possible Recommendations:

- 1) Immediately impose a **minimum** storage level/ANYTIME CUT-OFF of 850,000 AF rather than the current 600,000 AF
- 2) Keep the current TCEQ Emergency Order in effect
- 3) Require LCRA to utilize the hydrologic data from 2009 to the present to immediately update the hydrology of the Colorado River Basin
- 4) Require LCRA to update immediately actual and projected firm demands, using updated hydrology
- 5) Require LCRA to begin working immediately with stakeholders on a new WMP that:
 - Properly protects firm users in times of drought;
 - Utilizes the latest hydrologic data available, including the significantly lower inflows to the lakes, to re-evaluate water availability throughout the river basin; and
 - Provides true incentives for conservation by all parties, including proper water pricing and assessment of relative economic benefit created by use of the water.

If you would like to express your concerns about the latest version of the LCRA's application to amend the Water Management Plan, to request a contested case hearing and to share how this drought has affected you, send a letter before May 24 to:

Ms. Bridget C. Bohac, Chief Clerk
Office of the Chief Clerk (MC 105)
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

Courier or hand-deliver to:

Office of the Chief Clerk at TCEQ
12100 Park 35 Circle, Bldg F
Austin, TX 78753

OR

file **Electronically:**

Go to <http://www10.tceq.texas.gov/epic/ecmnts/>

Enter in: "**wrperm 5838**" (make sure put a space between the wrperm and 5838).

Speak out! Let your voice be heard.

www.OurWater-OurFuture.com
www.facebook.com/centraltexaswatercoalition

SAMPLE FORM LETTER

May ____, 2013

Ms. Bridget C. Bohac, Chief Clerk
Office of the Chief Clerk (MC 105)
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

Re: Comments and Request for Contested Case Hearing on Application to Amend the LCRA Water Management Plan; Application No. 5838A; TCEQ Water Rights Permit No. 5838

Dear Ms. Bohac:

This letter provides our comments on the Lower Colorado River Authority's application to amend its Water Management Plan (Permit No. 5838) and requests a contested case hearing on this application. Our contact information follows:

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

FAX NUMBER (IF ANY): _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

We are affected by this proposed amendment to the LCRA's Water Management Plan in the ways explained below. For these reasons, we request the TCEQ's careful attention to our comments and TCEQ's approval of our request for a hearing.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues. Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,
