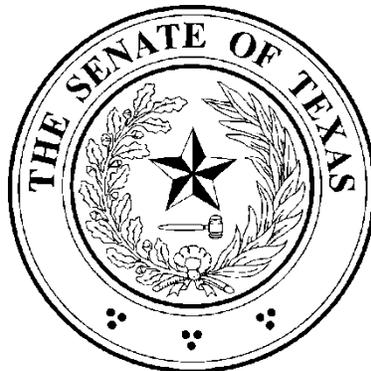


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Sen. Fraser (512) 463-0124
Sen. Watson (512) 463-0114



Senators Troy Fraser and Kirk Watson: Statement regarding the LCRA Board's action on their 2012 Water Management Plan Application

For over a year, Senators Troy Fraser and Kirk Watson have called on the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) to implement a water management plan that satisfies the LCRA's legal obligation to protect the water supply for the LCRA's firm water customers, even in times of drought. Today, we congratulate the LCRA Board for taking strong action to protect the water supply that serves over one million people as well as the critical industries that rely on the Colorado River and Highland Lakes.

Today's unanimous vote at LCRA reflects the recommendations of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), echoes the sentiments voiced by Senators Fraser and Watson, and incorporates key priorities for firm water customers. The new plan will closely monitor inflows along the Lower Colorado River and take into account any conditions which would indicate a drought or below-normal forecasted precipitation. With this approach, the LCRA will be able to ensure an adequate supply of water in the Highland Lakes to satisfy the current and future needs of firm customers who pay a premium for their water.

Over the past month, LCRA staff has conducted multiple stakeholder meetings to allow the public to provide meaningful input into the plan. Our focus now shifts to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), which must review and approve the plan. During the course of that review, affected holders of water rights and customers have an opportunity to provide comments and even ask for an independent, administrative hearing. All of this means that the ultimate outcome will not be known for some time. Furthermore, with each passing day of little rain, this region continues to navigate an unprecedented drought. If we keep setting new records, even this plan may require revisiting in the future.

However, the importance of the LCRA Board action today should not be understated. The LCRA Board's commitment to sound water management principles marks a new day for firm water customers in the basin and is a significant change from previous water management plans. A lot of hard work and sacrifice has gotten us to this point, and we stand ready to do whatever we can to see that TCEQ has the information it needs to get a strong and protective plan in place as soon as possible.

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