



**ORAL COMMENTS TO LCRA BOARD
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2022 LCRA BOARD MEETING
LCRA HEADQUARTERS, AUSTIN -- 10 AM**

Good morning. I'm Cindy Smiley, an attorney here in Austin, speaking to you today on behalf of the Central Texas Water Coalition (or CTWC).

As you heard when CTWC representatives provided comments to the Board at your meetings in May, CTWC is growing increasingly concerned about the ability of the existing LCRA Water Management Plan to protect the water supplies in the Highland Lakes and the entire river basin.

We agree with LCRA that the current Water Management Plan has improvements over past Plans. It now includes three evaluation dates during which actual conditions are reviewed and real-time decisions are made. However, CTWC does not believe the current WMP is protective enough. For example, even with very low inflows to the lakes, during warmer, drier conditions and expectations of continuing drought, the March 1 evaluation date under the current WMP told us that we were in "Normal" conditions. It sure doesn't feel Normal today.

The next key date under the existing WMP is coming up – on July 1 – and CTWC estimates that the combined volume of water in Lakes Buchanan and Travis may be below 1.3 MAF on that date. We realize that the 1.3 number triggers certain downward adjustments in releases from the Lakes, but we are concerned that those adjustments will be insufficient to maintain a sustainable water supply in the upper basin.

CTWC is looking at the current and projected conditions as causes for alarm because, as we understand it, LCRA does not plan to initiate an update of the existing WMP until March 2025. That's three years away. And then the submittal of an amendment application to the TCEQ could occur another two years after that. In other words, unless adjustments to the current WMP are initiated immediately, and optimistically assuming that the TCEQ reviews and approves LCRA's application only two years after its receipt, LCRA will spend at least seven more years managing the lakes under an inadequate WMP. That's too long and too risky.

We are asking you to initiate a targeted review of the WMP this year – with this focus: a review of the specific elements of the Plan that have the greatest impact on the sustainability of the upstream water supplies.

In closing, some observations about human nature. It's easier to face challenges together. To do that, we need to hear what the LCRA Board Members and Managers are thinking, and to hear your thoughts expressed and considered in public. It's easier to understand a government entity's actions when you, the decisionmakers, communicate in public.

We're eager to have a dialogue with LCRA on these issues, and to assist you in any way that we can.

Thank you.

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