

**ORAL COMMENTS 8.17.2022 FROM CENTRAL TEXAS WATER COALITION TO  
LCRA BOARD RE: WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN NEEDED UPDATE**

**Statement of Jo Karr Tedder**

My name is Jo Karr Tedder, a founder and President of Central Texas Water Coalition. I volunteer along with my entire Board to give a water voice to the citizens of Central Texas. We represent counties, cities, water supply companies, organizations, businesses, and people who are often unable to voice concerns without fear of repercussions. LCRA is not always viewed as an open and friendly agency - but by many as an unregulated monopoly.

We recognize that 95% of your revenue comes from electricity and transmission lines; we recognize that water is a tiny fraction of your revenue. However, your decisions on water management are absolutely critical to the health and welfare of this river basin.

The resolution requesting that you open the WMP has been supported by Travis and Burnet County Commissioners Courts, by individuals on the Williamson and Hays County courts, by cities, organizations, and individuals. We thank them for showing leadership and addressing the critical issue of limited water availability.

I was shocked by your refusal to even put this on the agenda and appalled at the cavalier reference to the many requests as “misinformed chatter.”

WHY NOT OPEN THE DISCUSSION NOW? We know you rely on your staff, but we can't understand the reason to NOT start now. We heard their “Don't worry, it's going to rain” during the 2010 WMP process, but it didn't, resulting in the emergency orders in the last catastrophic drought.

Now we're hearing “it's not as bad as 2011.” 2011 didn't have the population explosion. 2011 didn't have weeks of zero inflows, while releasing 1,000+ acre feet at Mansfield Dam daily. 2011 didn't have the historic La Nina. We hear the Water Wolf banging on the door, and we don't want to become the next California!

Friedrich Nietzsche said: *“Sometimes people don't want to hear the truth because they don't want their illusions destroyed.”*

It's time to deal with our reality! Gov. Abbott's Drought Declaration in July should have signaled the need to take a fresh look at the WMP.

Here's the bottom line; the WMP is biased to allow you to subsidize and provide water to rice corporations. It is NOT protective enough of the drinking water for over 2 million Central Texans. The paradigm has shifted and LCRA cannot continue business as usual.

Just imagine..... if we're entering a Megadrought and the almost half empty lakes are ALL OF OUR WATER FOR YEARS!

We need you, the Board appointed to be good stewards of the state's water, to speak up for Central Texas.

PLEASE DON'T CONTINUE TO GAMBLE WITH OUR DRINKING WATER!

## **Statement of Frank Cooley**

Good morning. I am Frank Cooley, Vice President Legal Services for the Central Texas Water Coalition.

LCRA's failure to acknowledge in its Agenda yesterday or today the increasing concerns regarding the Water Management Plan, is an abdication of your statutory responsibilities. In yesterday's Water Ops meeting, the public's concern expressed by the representatives of over 1.5 million people were dismissed as mere "chatter". LCRA has a responsibility to protect our region's water supply. A failure to address the deepening crisis we are experiencing reflects a grievous disregard of the public's interest in a reliable water supply.

Resolutions have been passed by numerous City and County governments. The elected representatives of a million and a half people in Central Texas have asked LCRA to reopen the WMP to address its flaws. The topic deserves open and public discussion. My colleague, Dave Lindsay, will identify issues that should be considered. LCRA's statutory responsibility to safeguard our region's water supply is at stake. I simply do not understand why the Board is not considering these Resolutions openly and discussing them at your meetings.

As Board members, I ask each one of you to answer for yourself the following questions:

- Does the WMP adequately account for the fact that there have been zero or virtually zero inflows into the Highland Lakes in August?
- Are you comfortable that the WMP has accurately considered what may be developing as the worst drought in our region's history?
- Have you already concluded that the WMP is so perfectly written that it does not need to be revised until 2025?
- Are you confident that 2025 projected demands should be the sole basis for proactively strengthening our drinking water supply?
- Does refusing to review the WMP seem fair and responsive to the serious concerns expressed by the representatives of your ultimate customers?

We believe it would be a serious dereliction of your duties to fail to review the WMP, the concerns are real, they are not just chatter.

## **Statement of David Lindsay**

My name is Dave Lindsay and I am Vice President of Technical Research for CTWC.

I am going to briefly highlight some of the flaws that provide a sound foundation for requesting the update of the WMP.

The major issues include:

- 1<sup>st</sup> -We are observing a dramatic trend of lower inflows into the Highland lakes, that make up our water supply. This trend is being driven by structural changes in the watershed, higher temperatures that increase evaporation and the shift of the "dry line" to a new normal of more arid conditions. We believe that we no longer can rely on and count on the historical inflow data used by the current WMP process, and a new approach is needed.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> -Very low inflows; the expected continuation of La Nina; increasing firm customer water demands; and high water demands from 1<sup>st</sup> crop, are driving a very rapid depletion of our water supply. According to LCRA's worst case projections, our water supply will be depleted by over 500,000 acre-feet by October, or 1/3 of our water supply in just seven months. This will leave us with under 1 million acre-feet, and vulnerable, if the drought continues. We need a

better Plan that protects us from lakes going down so quickly to better protect us from extended severe droughts and these lower inflows we're experiencing.

- 3rd - Releases of 181,000 acre-feet in 2020 for environmental flow requirements that are in this Plan were a really big surprise, this is more water than Austin uses in a year. This needs to be reviewed and clarified.
- 4<sup>th</sup> - The current minimum combined storage reserve of only 600,000 acre-feet was set back in 2010, and now really appears to be too small to support the large and growing population and business growth during an extended severe drought.
- 5<sup>th</sup> - We are concerned that LCRA is using overly optimistic approaches on the Yield calculations that are likely allowing over-selling of the available water. For example, the Firm and System Yield calculations allow selling the water until the lakes are empty, and do not appear to include all permitted demands. A more conservative approach is needed that provides a sustainable water supply and better protects us against droughts that are worse than the drought of record.
- Lastly, and kind of strangely, conservation by Firm customers is not protected in this current plan. Instead, those savings of water could be released downstream if they result in helping to meet trigger levels prescribed in the Plan.

Now, its recognized that these issues are complex and that addressing them will require creative solutions, but they will take time and as such we need to begin sooner rather than later.

Thank you very much.