



Statement of Central Texas Water Coalition
Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2018

Good morning Chair Timmerman, members of the Board, and members of the staff. I am Frank Cooley, Vice President of Legal Services for the Central Texas Water Coalition. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to LCRA's Water Management Plan.

Before my substantive comments on the WMP, I would like to compliment and congratulate the LCRA personnel who so ably handled the recent torrential flooding in central Texas. It was a difficult task under trying conditions, and we appreciate the hard work of the LCRA management and staff in handling this crisis. Thank you.

The proposed WMP has major improvements. There are limits on the amount of stored water for interruptible customers. If there is a flash drought, a second crop may be cut off. No interruptible water is released if the combined storage falls below 1.1 million acre-feet. This WMP uses more recent hydrology. These are all positive developments.

We look to LCRA to encourage and support water conservation by all of its customers. While Firm water customers have conserved mightily, it seems that Agricultural Interruptible customers are not held to the same standard. The Agricultural Interruptible contracts rely on a metric that is at least 30 years old.

We have asked the staff to address these concerns regarding the conservation efforts of LCRA's agricultural customers. LCRA should perform a detailed analysis of the proper "duty" for the crops irrigated.

The latest results from LCRA's water availability models, show 75% likelihood that Interruptible customers will receive a full-supply for first and second irrigation seasons. Despite this high reliability, LCRA's irrigation customers pay less than 10% of the rate paid by Firm customers for raw water. We respectfully request LCRA's commitment to reevaluate the rates charged for its Interruptible water.

In the recent LCRA briefings attendees discussed: 1) the dramatic decline in total inflows to the Highland Lakes; and 2) water accounting methods that provide a "credit" for Firm water that is conserved and remains in storage. CTWC strongly supports both of these efforts.

Let me be clear. The message Central Texas Water Coalition wants you to hear is that, "we are worried about the future water supply in the Lower Colorado River basin."

Water will become even more important than the issues facing our congested roads and other infrastructure. Water will become THE issue holding back economic growth and prosperity.

We are asking for your thoughtful leadership on the management of our water resources.

Thank you.