



LOWER COLORADO RIVER AUTHORITY
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LCRA SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON LONG-RANGE WATER SUPPLY PLAN

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AUSTIN – LCRA is seeking public input on its draft Water Supply Resource Plan, a 90-year plan focused on meeting water needs in the lower Colorado River basin. Individuals can give input by attending an upcoming meeting or by completing an online form at www.lcra.org/watersupply.

“LCRA is planning water supply for future generations,” said Tom Mason, LCRA General Manager. “The Highland Lakes, built some 70 years ago, have met our region’s water needs and enabled economic growth and prosperity. It is important for us to come together and start planning for the water needs of our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.”

The Water Supply Resource Plan will be LCRA’s roadmap for how it will meet water needs for cities, businesses and industries to the year 2100. The planning process began in mid-2008 with input from the public on water supply options and planning priorities. Based on this input and technical analysis, LCRA staff prepared the draft plan that includes potential water supply projects, how much they could cost, and how the projects may affect available water for the environment, lake levels and downstream farmers.

“The LCRA Board and I look forward to hearing input from the public and LCRA’s customers,” said Rebecca A. Klein, LCRA’s Board chair. “Knowing the concerns and preferences from the public served by LCRA will inform the Board’s decisions about future water supply options.”

Water supply options explored in the draft plan include enhanced conservation programs and building new supplies such as downstream off-channel reservoirs, desalinating brackish groundwater or sea water, storing water in aquifers and recovering it when needed, and use of groundwater. Costs for such options range from \$3 million to \$1.6 billion.

“The good news is that we have many options for expanding water supplies in the future and we have time to consider which options are best for our region,” Mason said.

LCRA’s current water supplies, the Highland Lakes and the ability to use water from the river, are expected to provide adequate water for cities and industries for the next 50 years or more.

“Residents in the lower Colorado River basin experienced months of severe drought in 2008 and 2009, which stressed these supplies,” said James Kowis, LCRA manager of water supply planning. “Recent rains have eased the effects of the drought, but it is not over yet.”

Water storage levels in lakes Buchanan and Travis have risen to about 60 percent full from their low point of 39 percent full in September 2009. LCRA will continue to monitor and manage the region’s water supplies during this and future droughts and will incorporate lessons from the droughts into the Water Supply Resource Plan, which will be updated periodically.

Attend a community conversation:

Tuesday, Feb. 23: open house 5:30 p.m.; discussion 6-8 p.m.

El Campo Civic Center

2350 N. Mechanic St. (State Highway 71)

El Campo, Texas 77437

Thursday, Feb. 25: open house 5:30 p.m.; discussion 6-8 p.m.

Burnet Community Center

401 E. Jackson St.

Burnet, Texas 78611

Monday, March 8: open house 6 p.m.; discussion 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Austin - LCRA Service Center

3505 Montopolis Drive, Building A

Austin, Texas 78744

The deadline for public input is March 19, 2010. To read the draft plan and give input, visit www.lcra.org/watersupply or e-mail watersupply@lcra.org