



October 28, 2015

Via Email: sanjeev.kalaswad@twdb.texas.gov

Dr. Sanjeev Kalaswad
Director of Conservation and Innovative Water Technologies
Texas Water Development Board
PO Box 13231
Austin, TX 78711

RE: Request for Input on Brackish Groundwater Production Zones (HB 30)

Dear Dr. Kalaswad:

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 30 directing the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to identify and designate brackish groundwater production zones in areas of the state, subject to various limitations. The TWDB is seeking public input to identify and designate local or regional brackish groundwater production zones in areas, with moderate to high availability and productivity of groundwater, which can be used to reduce the use of fresh groundwater.

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) has identified a possible project that can make use of brackish groundwater to reduce dependence on fresh surface water. LCRA has obligations established by LCRA's Water Management Plan to release stored water from Lakes Buchanan and Travis, in some circumstances, to help meet freshwater inflow needs of Matagorda Bay. LCRA believes that it may be possible to deliver brackish groundwater to the bay in amounts that would provide benefit to the bay and reduce (but not eliminate) reliance on releases of fresh water from these lakes, thus allowing it to be used for other beneficial purposes. The information on hand suggests that substantial volumes of slightly brackish groundwater are available in the area of Matagorda Bay.

LCRA asks that TWDB consider designation of the Gulf Coast aquifer in an area under Matagorda Bay and East Matagorda Bay. The area is generally described as six miles wide from the Intracoastal Waterway (ICWW) to the barrier island, and 40 miles long, centered on the intersection of the ICWW and the Colorado River (20 miles northeast and 20 miles southwest of the ICWW intersection with the Colorado River).

In designating a brackish groundwater production zone, LCRA understands the TWDB will determine the amount of brackish groundwater that the zone is capable of producing over a 30-year period and a 50-year period without causing a significant impact to water availability or water quality in any area of the same (or other) aquifers. The project LCRA has identified would pump infrequently, only as needed, to manage salinity levels

in the bay and the annual pumpage would vary greatly. Subject to field studies on the bay and delta dynamics as well as groundwater availability, the maximum annual brackish groundwater pumpage that LCRA is studying is 12,000 acft to 24,000 acft, depending on the areal extent of the project.

LCRA would be pleased to work with TWDB on the evaluation of this request for designation of the brackish production zone.

Sincerely,



David Wheelock, P.E.
Manager, Water Supply Planning

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