

## **Agenda Item 7.6(d)....9/15/04**

### **Recommendation of Water Policy Workgroup on 5/18/04**

**TOPIC:**

**OTHER ISSUES – INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION / INTER-REGIONAL WATER SHARING**

**BRAZOS G RWPG POLICY RECOMMENDATION:**

“Brazos G RWPG will be proactive in communication and interaction with neighboring RWPGs on water issues of mutual concern. Regional water planning areas are not intended to be barriers to prevent interaction between RWPGs.”



#### **TWDB FACT SHEET FROM WEB SITE**

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**Policy Topic:** Other issues--  
Inter-regional cooperation/Inter-regional water sharing

**Brief Description of Issue:** How can plans be prepared on regional basis without setting up potential obstacles to cooperation in securing water supplies?

**Possible Solutions, Impacts, Considerations:**

More fully document benefits of inter-regional cooperation, including opportunities for cost savings or cost sharing.

As recommended by one planning region, request that the Legislature make it very clear to all Texans that the boundaries of the regional water planning areas are not intended to be barriers to prevent water transport from one region to another nor to pit one region against another for any reason.

## **Background:**

This policy topic addresses the general cooperation and sharing of water between Regional Water Planning Groups. Other related topics, including groundwater exports and interbasin transfers, will be addressed in more detail as separate issues.

Regional water planning has presented certain advantages over previous approaches, including recognition of regional differences and improving opportunities for local input.

Water demand and supply vary considerably from region to region. Given the highly variable statewide distribution of water resources, some regions are not able to meet demands by relying solely on locally available supplies.

There are a number of tools that can promote coordination between regions.

- Statute provides that the Texas Water Development Board may approve a regional water plan only after it has determined that all interregional conflicts involving that regional water planning area have been resolved.
- Representation on Regional Water Planning Groups (RWPGs) promotes opportunities for coordination. Each RWPG identifies a nonvoting liaison to attend meetings of adjacent planning regions. Additionally, many regions have nonvoting representatives that are headquartered in another region, but hold substantial water rights in the region.
- Regional water planning guidelines also provide a more formal mechanism for coordination between regions.

Regional water planning groups may form voluntary associations composed of representatives of one or more regional water planning areas. These interregional planning committees may coordinate interregional issues that will benefit each regional water planning area, and may conduct joint studies of issues affecting their regions. Regional water planning groups may enter into written agreements with one or more other regional water planning groups that are binding to the extent allowed by law. These agreements could, in addition to other purposes, allow two or more regional water planning groups to jointly prepare one plan for all or a portion of their regional water planning areas subject to approval of all regional water planning groups involved.

Some examples of cooperation between regions include:

- The South Central Texas Regional Water Plan included an analysis of a strategy to include cooperation with Corpus Christi for new water sources. The regional water plan stated, “the objective of this option is to benefit both regions by improving efficiency and lowering costs of developing new sources of water for both regions.” Additional study of this strategy was recommended in the regional plan.

- The 2001 regional water plans provide other examples of potential inter-regional water sharing. For example, the LCRA-SAWS water project proposes that Colorado River water be supplied to San Antonio, while making improvements to secure local irrigation supplies.
- Following completion of the initial set of regional plans, several regions (K, L, M, N, P) examined opportunities for cooperation with financial assistance from TWDB. The report, Management Strategies for Potential Inter-Regional Cooperation, is available at:

[http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/RWPG/rpgm\\_rpts/2002483432.pdf](http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/RWPG/rpgm_rpts/2002483432.pdf)

**Recommendations:** To be developed