

2005 Legislation – SB 3
David Meesey
Texas Water Development Board



Warning; subject to change!

- 78 amendments to SB 3 prior to 4/19 committee hearing
- The bill may be changing as we speak
- Favorable outlook in the Senate; most opposition will focus on the House

Regional Water Plan Amendments

- Expedited process:
 - EA approves in advance
 - Does not over-allocate water source
 - Does not include a new reservoir
 - No significant impact on instream or B&E

Regional Water Plan Amendments

- **Alternate Strategy Amendments**
 - No EA approval required; may adopt at a public planning group meeting
 - Substitutes a strategy in the plan with a previously evaluated plan alternative
 - Full evaluation as WMS required; must be included in approved regional water plan

Other Components-Environmental Flow

- Essential human needs are priority over environmental needs during drought
- TCEQ determines flow needed for river systems and bays/estuaries
 - May adjust existing permits to require environmental flows of $\leq 12.5\%$

Environmental Flows Commission

Environmental Flows Commission

- Changes membership from 15 to 9
 - 3 Senate, 3 House; 3 Agency Commissioners
 - Appoints Science Advisory Committee
 - Recommends schedule for priority bay/basins
 - Establishes local stakeholder groups
 - Establishes expert science teams to recommend flows for local areas

Conjunctive Water Management

- Water Conservation

- Public awareness campaign
- TWDB-Report on implementation status
- Require utilities to submit plans
- TCEQ exempt water right from cancellation if nonuse is the result of conservation
- TWDB study “take or pay” contracts

Promotes conjunctive use projects through financing (TWDB) and permitting (TCEQ) incentives

GMAC: Not Just a Lending Agency

- Groundwater Management Area Councils
 - 16 GMACs, each with TWDB hydrologist for technical expertise for GMAC and each GCD
 - Requires GCDs to use consistent methods to measure GW subject to regulation
 - Substantive review of management plans

Goal is the coordinated management of GW by districts throughout a GMAC

Groundwater and GMACs

- Statewide Groundwater District for all state-owned land
- Historic Use Permits
 - Based on historic use for any 1-year period
 - Limited to initial purpose of use
 - Amendments trigger certain requirements
 - Applies to land in Conservation Reserve Prog.

Water Infrastructure Financing

- Provides a fee on individual water bills to fund water infrastructure statewide
- Includes ag. Conservation, rural water & wastewater projects; replaces some G.R.
- Statewide program to fund water & wastewater projects in economically disadvantaged areas

Edwards Aquifer Authority

- Provides EAA with more flexibility to manage the Edwards Aquifer
- Requires EAA to establish a Critical Period Management Plan triggered by streamflows in San Marcos & Comal Springs instead of index well levels.

Questions and Discussion

- By the time you read this, the bill probably will have changed.
- Tune in again in late May for results.