

Minutes of the May 13, Meeting of the Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group for the Senate Bill 1 Regional Water Planning for Region "N"

This meeting of the Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group (Coastal Bend RWPG) was held in the auditorium at the TAMU Research and Extension Center, 10345 Agnes Street, Corpus Christi, Texas 78406. The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Jerry Kane at 1:35 p.m. Mr. James Dodson noted the RWPG members not present.

Members of the RWPG in attendance included: Mr. Jerry Kane, Mr. Ben Figueroa, Mr. Robert Kunkel, Mr. Bobby Nedbalek, Mr. Fausto Yturria, Dr. Jennifer Prouty, Dr. Patrick Hubert, Mr. Bernie DeLaune, Mr. Scott Bledsoe III, Ms. Carola Serrato, Mr. Bernard Paulson, Mr. Billy Dick, Mr. Robert Flores, Mr. Jim Tolan, Mr. Dexter Svetlik, Mr. Robert Fulbright, Mr. Vincente Guerra, Con Mims, Haskell Simon, and Scott Murray

Also in attendance were Ms. Kay Whatley (for Judge Josephine Miller), Mr. Ken Choffel, and Mr. Mike Mahaffey.

Mr. Jerry Kane began the meeting by recognizing the Texas Water Foundation's "Watertime in '99" event. He then read a letter he received from Senator Buster Brown referring to the Coastal Bend RWPG's participation in the "Watertime in '99" event. He then introduced Mayor Loyd Neal. Mayor Neal welcomed the guests of the meeting to the Corpus Christi area and commented on the area's dedication to water responsibility. He then welcomed Nolan Ryan to the Coastal Bend and presented him with a key to the City of Corpus Christi.

Mr. Kane next introduced Jack Hunt from the Texas Water Development Board. Mr. Hunt commented on the positive meetings between the Texas Water Development Board and the Texas Parks and Wildlife that he has attended as well as the Texas Water Foundation. Mr. Hunt specifically mentioned the importance of the Texas Water Foundation's focus on the Coastal Bend Region. Mr. Hunt also commended the Coastal Bend Region for their excellence in water planning. Mr. Hunt then recognized Nolan Ryan as a steward for water, agriculture, and the environment. He spoke about the need for understanding the balance between the three and thanked the Coastal Bend for their effort in aiding in this understanding.

Mr. Jerry Kane then introduced Special Guest Speaker Nolan Ryan. Mr. Ryan began by expressing our dependence on water in our everyday lives. He then spoke about the effect that the drought in 1996 had on him and his livelihood. He mentioned that as an outdoorsman and a member of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, he understood the vitality of freshwater inflows into the bays and estuaries. However, he also acknowledged his dependence on water for his ranching operations and business, including how his motel and restaurant near Choke Canyon Reservoir depend on water levels in the reservoir to draw visitors to that facility. Mr. Ryan spoke about the turmoil of being on both sides of the water issues. He stated that he believed it was the drought of 1996 that created a statewide realization

that water resources are an issue; thus producing the need for legislation such as SB1. Mr. Ryan conveyed to the members and guests that the purpose of the Texas Water Foundation is to educate people about the complexity of Texas' water issues and how it effects everybody. He called for an understanding of the balance of needs between municipalities, industries, agriculture, recreation, and the environment. Finally, Mr. Ryan recognized and commended the Coastal Bend RWPG on their excellent efforts in regional water planning. Mr. Kane thanked Nolan Ryan for attending the Coastal Bend RWPG meeting and called for a recess.

Mr. Jerry Kane called for the meeting to reconvene at 2:33 p.m.

Minutes from the March 11, 1998 meeting of the Regional Water Planning Group for the Senate Bill 1 Regional Water Planning Program for Region "N" were reviewed. There were no requested additions or modifications to the minutes. A motion was made and seconded for the minutes to be approved. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Discussion was opened on Item V, Consideration of Appointment of a Voting Member to represent Electrical Generating Utility Interests due to the resignation of Gonzalo Sandoval; Consideration of Appointment of a Non-Voting Member to Represent the Texas Department of Agriculture. Mr. Paulson stated that the Membership Subcommittee met and recommends Mr. Scott Murray as a replacement for Mr. Gonzalo Sandoval. Mr. Paulson also stated that the Membership Subcommittee recommends that the Texas Department Of Agriculture become a Non-Voting Member and be allowed to send their designated representatives to the Coastal Bend RWPG meetings. A motion was made and seconded to accept the recommendations of the Membership Subcommittee; the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Kane stated that Item VI, Consideration of an Amendment to the "Resolution Requesting the Texas Water Development Board to Review and Revise Population Projections" as Approved by the Coastal Bend RWPG on March 11, 1999, was being tabled. Mr. Kane asked Mr. Dodson for his comments on why Item VI was being tabled. Mr. Dodson explained that the revised projections are still in the process of being finalized and requested that action on Item VI be taken at the next meeting. Mr. Kane asked for any objections. No objections to tabling Item VI were made.

Mr. Kane then asked for discussion concerning the Definition of a "Major Water Provider." Mr. Choffel explained that the Texas Water Development Board requires that each region designate "Major Water Providers" as defined by the Texas Water Development Board's rules. The rules define a "Major Water Provider" as supplier of significant quantities of either raw or treated water to municipalities or industries. He stated that the Coastal Bend RWPG's choices are to designate just the City of Corpus Christi as the major water provider for the region or designate the City of Corpus Christi, San Patricio Municipal Water District, and South Texas Water Authority as major water providers. Mr. Choffel then commented that should the Coastal Bend RWPG designate the three water providers then there would be composites for water demand and supply for each entity rather than just one composite, as would be the case if the City of Corpus Christi is the only entity designated. Mr. Dodson stated that he would like to hear questions and comments from the RWPG members and then vote on the concept at the next meeting.

Mr. Kane asked that, with the RWPG members' permission, the scope of work be amended to include a Desalination Facility Siting Study Proposal. Mr. Dodson stated that this discussion item has a purpose to solicit comments and questions about the recommended amendment. Mr. Kane explained that this

particular proposal would help define an actual site for construction of a desalination facility. Dr. Prouty commented that it would possibly be feasible to find a site for the desalination facility that would allow usage of brackish water first, then desalinate seawater. She then asked if that could be included in the scope of work. Mr. Kane stated that it was a possibility

but he also mentioned that brackish water is limited in the region with regards to possible pumping rates and the ability for the brackish water to be replenished. Dr. Hubert expressed his concern for the fresh water table from the effects of pumping brackish groundwater for desalination. Mr. Kane reassured Dr. Hubert that his concerns would be addressed during the desalination siting study. Mr. Kunkel inquired about the effect that this amendment would have on the rest of the scope of work. Mr. Kane replied that nothing from the approved scope of work would be compromised. Mr. Yturria commented about the new technologies being used for desalination in reference to an article he had read. Mr. Dodson stressed that this particular amendment is intended to look at siting related issues only, not desalination techniques. Dr. Prouty asked about the possibility of producing a saleable product after the salt water had been treated. Mr. Kane stated that producing a saleable chemical is a possibility and Mr. Dodson reiterated that the document in the agenda packet is only a preliminary outline for the proposed desalination siting study. Mr. Kane requested that further discussion occur regarding this matter.

Mr. Kane commented on the All-Chairs conference call, which he was unable to sit in on. Mr. Dodson expressed that most of the discussion during the conference call was administrative and he reassured the RWPG members that there was nothing from the conference call that would impede their progress.

Mr. Kane then introduced Mr. Ken Choffel, of HDR Engineering, Inc., project manager for the Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning study. Mr. Choffel provided an update on the project. He began by informing the RWPG members about the progress of the scope of work. He stated that the population and water demand projections are near complete with the exception of some changes that are being made in reference to Item VI on the agenda. Mr. Choffel also informed the RWPG members that currently four water supply options have been identified, drafted, and are being prepared for review. He then mentioned that although the groundwater modeling is underway by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, the consultants would request that a technical advisory committee be formed in order to help in some decision-making. He described the needs, duties, and requirements for volunteers that would serve on the groundwater technical advisory committee.

Mr. Choffel then presented one of the water options that is being evaluated for the Coastal Bend RWPG area, namely the idea of constructing a two-way pipeline between Choke Canyon Reservoir and Lake Corpus Christi. Mr. Choffel reported on the mechanics of the option as well as the economics and water yield. Mr. Paulson asked about the effect on the level of Choke Canyon that this pipeline would cause. Mr. Choffel stated that Choke Canyon water level should be higher. Ms. Serrato inquired about the difference between the option of allowing a lower operating level for Lake Corpus Christi and the option of constructing the two-way pipeline. Mr. Choffel replied that under analysis that includes the new drought of record, simply operating Lake Corpus Christi at a lower level would not yield as much water as once thought. Mr. Svetlik inquired about where drainage loss was going. Mr. Choffel replied that no analysis of that type has been done, but that the channel loss to the Goliad Sands will be analyzed during the scope of work.

Mr. Kane then introduced Robert Flores, TWDB's liaison to the Coastal Bend RWPG. Mr. Flores stated that the Texas Water Development Board anticipates the appropriations bill to pass by the end of May.

He also publicized the coordination and upcoming meeting of Regions L and M. Mr. Fulbright stated that the meeting would concern cooperation of addressing water issues, particularly groundwater. Mr. Flores then reiterated the Texas Water Development Board's willingness to work with the Coastal Bend RWPG concerning changes to some of the population and water demand projections. He also urged members to become familiar with the Major Water Providers and the representative map. Mr. Flores stated that he believes this will help the Coastal Bend RWPG reach a better understanding of the situation and therefore develop a more well rounded decision. Mr. Flores finally informed the Coastal Bend RWPG members that the ruling to overturn right of capture was denied. He finished by asking the members to read through the ruling because he believes it reaffirms regional water planning. Mr. Dodson indicated that a copy of the Supreme Court ruling would be mailed to the RWPG members. Mr. Flores was then asked about the status of appropriations and he reiterated that the status seemed favorable for the Coastal Bend RWPG.

Mr. Kane next introduced Mr. Con Mims, Executive Director of the Nueces River Authority and liaison from the South-Central RWPG. Mr. Mims reported on the progress of the South-Central RWPG. He informed the members that the South-Central region had submitted 57 water supply options and plan to research every one. He also stated that 20% of their funds were being dedicated to public outreach and new options. Mr. Mims expressed his encouragement from the South-Central RWPG's willingness to work with the Coastal Bend RWPG. Mr. Kane requested that Mr. Mims sit on that coordinating committee. Mr. Choffel suggested that a representative from San Antonio should be on the groundwater modeling technical advisory committee. Mr. Mims finished by stating the Edwards Aquifer Authority's similarities and agreement to work on projects together. Mr. Dodson informed the members that copies of the 57 options are available.

Mr. Dodson provided the members with a financial status report concerning administrative costs. Ms. Serrato and Mr. Dodson explained that the report would allow the members to compare the percentage of time into the budget period versus the percentage of the total budget that has been spent. Ms. Serrato mentioned that there are 10 quarters within the budget period therefore each quarter is 10%.

Mr. Dodson then provided the members with some Items of Interest regarding recent water issues and water legislation.

Mr. Kane opened the meeting for General Public Comment. There was no public comment.

Mr. Kane set the date for the next meeting for July 8, 1999.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Ms. Gabrielle Grunkemeyer and Mr. James Dodson

Minutes Submitted by: _____

Dr. Patrick Hubert, Secretary

Date

Coastal Bend RWPG