

Minutes of the November 11, 1999 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. Co-Chair Jerry Kane called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

Mr. Kane called roll.

Members of the RWPG in attendance included Mr. Jerry Kane, Dr. David McNichols, Mr. Bobby Nedbalek, Dr. Jennifer Prouty, Dr. Patrick Hubert, Mr. Bernie DeLaune, Mr. Billy Dick, Mr. Robert Kunkel, Mr. Fausto Yturria, Ms. Carola Serrato, Mr. Robert Flores, Mr. Vincente Guerra, Mr. Con Mims, Mr. James Gill, and Mr. Jim Tolan.

Also in attendance were Mr. Greg Carter (for Mr. Scott Murray), and Mr. Steven Ashley of the Coastal Bend Council of Government. In attendance from the City of Corpus Christi were Mr. Ron Massey, Mr. Ed Garana, Mr. Skip Noe, and Ms. Sandra Koenning. Mr. Bryan Black, Mr. Larry Land, and Mr. Kelly Payne attended representing HDR Engineering, Inc. Mr. Jim Naismith of San Patricio Municipal Water District also attended. Presenters in attendance included Mr. Jim Jensen of PB Water, Ms. Cindy Loeffler of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), and Mr. Randy Williams from the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). Mr. Ken Jones from the Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Water Planning Group (LRGVRWPG) also attended. Ms. Evelyn Bonavita (Chair) and Mr. Steve Raabe of the San Antonio River Authority were in attendance representing the South Central Regional Water Planning Group.

Mr. Kane noted the members who were absent: Judge Josephine Miller (excused), Mr. Ben Figueroa, Mr. Ariel Garcia, Mr. Scott Bledsoe, Mr. Robert Fulbright, and Mr. Cole Rowland.

Minutes from the October 14, 1999 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. Mr. Fausto Yturria made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Robert Kunkel seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Next, Mr. Kane introduced Agenda Item IV: Old Business: Discussion and Possible Action: Major Water Providers in the Coastal Bend. Mr. James Dodson explained the contents of the packet sent to the members regarding the designation of Major Water Providers. Mr. Dodson stated that the packet included information on

the requirements and standards an entity must possess in order to be designated a Major Water Provider. He also stated that the packet included a list of Major Water Providers designated by other RWPGs and a table of local water providers including their 1996 municipal and industrial water use. Mr. Dodson asked that members notice that the City of Corpus Christi is the largest retail water provider but they also provide water to other water providers such as San Patricio Municipal Water District and South Texas Water Authority. Mr. Dodson asked for suggestions and discussion.

Mr. Jim Naismith asked what exactly is the purpose of designating Major Water Providers (MWP). Mr. Dodson took this opportunity to introduce Mr. Kelly Payne. Mr. Payne stated that the designation is a tool that will be used by the TWDB. He stated that HDR is required to prepare additional tabulations of information on the designated MWPs for TWDB. He also stressed that there is no clarification on what this information will be used for in the future. Mr. Robert Flores stated that TWDB does not anticipate this information being used very much in the

future. He explained that TWDB views this information more as planning and accounting tools for the regions as well as acting as identifiers for possibly threatened areas. Mr. Flores stressed that although the designation of MWPs can be helpful, the decision is entirely in the hands of the RWPGs. Mr. Kane asked what kind of thresholds are being set in other regions for the designation of MWPs. Mr. Payne stated that other regions have designated entities that provide 5% or more of the municipal and industrial water supply. Mr. Kane then asked what is the lowest amount of water sold in the Coastal Bend Region. Mr. Dodson stated that in the Coastal Bend Region water sales range from less than 300 acre-feet per year to 117, 000 acre-feet per year. Mr. Payne again stressed that this is only an accounting exercise for creating tables for the TWDB. Mr. Payne explained that all entities, even those that are not listed as MWPs, will undergo a certain level of scrutiny; no one is favored.

Dr. Patrick Hubert noted that Baffin Bay Water Supply Company was not represented on the table provided in the packet. Dr. Hubert expressed his concern for not designating every water provider. He stated that if the RWPG does not designate every water provider as a MWP, some might miss opportunities for funds or other governmental aid. Mr. Kane agreed with Dr. Hubert's concerns. Mr. Dodson reminded the RWPG members that more designations of MWPs means a much larger effort towards generating additional reports. Mr. Payne stated that he understood Dr. Hubert's concerns. Mr. Flores stated that these designations could be addressed at other times during the planning period or at a later planning period. Mr. Ken Jones stated that not designating MWPs does not create any monetary change. He also stated that the LRGVRWPG felt that the ability to change the designations in later planning periods was the ultimate deciding factor for them not to designate MWPs at this time.

Mr. Kane asked for objections to the designations outlined in the packet. Dr. Hubert expressed his concerns again. Mr. Kane suggested that the designations be based on thresholds. Mr. Payne stated that thresholds used in other regions are 5% of total supply and over four wholesale customers. Mr. Kane suggested that language used in the designations provide for further amendments should they be needed. Mr. Kunkel made the motion to designate the City of Corpus Christi and San Patricio Municipal Water District as the Major Water Providers with the inclusion that all water suppliers are considered major water providers but the two designated meet the current threshold criteria. Mr. Nedbalek seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice

vote.

Mr. Kane next introduced Agenda Item V: Old Business: Discussion and Possible Action: Determining Ground Water Availability in the Gulf Coast Aquifer in the coastal Bend Planning Area. Mr. Dodson introduced Mr. Larry Land to discuss any questions concerning the groundwater availability model. Mr. Land recapped his last presentation and stated that the Groundwater Advisory Panel (GAP) had reached an agreement on a recommendation of the level of criteria that should be used: Level II/III. He also showed the RWPG members that the model has been further broken down into county levels. Mr. Land provided the RWPG members with data showing the amounts of groundwater from the Gulf Coast aquifer that are available in each county. He also stated that the proposed recommendation reached by the GAP includes an amendment stating that any county pumping more than the recommended level will be required to do a local study to ensure that the additional pumping will not cause harm to the groundwater availability. Mr. Land expressed that the criteria chosen by the GAP should sustain groundwater in the Coastal Bend Region as well as support any growth. Mr. Kane expressed concern about the level of groundwater pumping that is currently occurring in Duval County. Mr. Land explained

that most of that groundwater is used for uranium mining and is therefore put back into the aquifer. Mr. Dodson explained that the mining in Duval County does not have to be shut down in order to meet the criteria. However, Mr. Land did state that in order for more growth to occur in Duval County other sources of water would need to be researched.

Dr. Hubert read the recommendation including the amendment reached by the GAP. Mr. Ed Garana asked if the model included hydraulically available water or was the water quality considered. Mr. Land stated that water quality was considered when creating the groundwater availability model. Mr. Land also stated that the area is only pumping two-thirds of the volume recommended in the proposed level. Dr. Jennifer Prouty asked what the major uses were in Duval County. Mr. Land stated that the major uses were mining and irrigation. Mr. Land confirmed the estimated rate of recharge is reliable. Dr. David McNichols expressed his concern on whether or not the recharge rate is representative of future trends such as drought and population growth. Mr. Land explained that any long term wet periods would balance the dry periods thus giving the average recharge rate estimated.

Ms. Carola Serrato confirmed with Mr. Rick Hay that the historical extent of wells pumping in the region were reasonable. Mr. Hay stated that the data dates back to the 1930s. Dr. Hubert explained that the test level that chosen by the GAP is a compromise between test level 2 and test 3. Mr. Kane asked for a motion. Dr. McNichols asked about the concern of subsidence. Mr. Land reassured the members that subsidence is not really a problem in the Coastal Bend Region. Dr. Prouty asked about updated data. Mr. Land stated that information is updated every 5 years. He also stated that many of the counties that appear to be reaching their maximum allowance of pumping are switching to surface water supplies. A motion to accept the recommendation of the GAP was made by Ms. Serrato. Dr. Hubert seconded the motion with the amendment including a statement that counties over pumping must provide impact studies. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Next, Mr. Kane called upon Mr. Dodson to introduce the meeting's presenters. Mr. Dodson began by recapping the Scope of Work requirements of the desalting siting study. He also informed the members that the TWDB has provided funds to the Coastal Bend RWPG to further the efforts being made to understand desalting and its feasibility. Mr. Dodson explained that ultimately the TWDB would like to have the information that is gathered by the Coastal Bend region available for other regions in the state. He noted that members from the South-Central Regional Water Planning Group as well as members from the Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group were in attendance, primarily to hear more about the Coastal Bend's efforts towards learning more about desalting.

Mr. Dodson next introduced Mr. Jim Jensen of PB Water from Tampa Bay, Florida. Mr. Dodson explained that the desalting plant in Tampa Bay is the focus of much of the desalt study for the Coastal Bend RWPG and Mr. Jensen has been a part of the Tampa Bay program for several years.

Mr. Jensen described the steps that have been taken towards making the Tampa Bay Desalting plant operational. He stated that this particular operation was considered because the area wanted to reduce groundwater use. Therefore, they began to research other alternative water resources. Aside from explaining the process being used to establish the desalting facility, Mr. Jensen explained its mechanics. Mr. Jensen informed the members that the Tampa Bay Desalting Facility

was made possible by researching available technologies, minimizing environmental impacts, and ensuring cost-effectiveness.

Mr. Kane excused himself and asked Dr. Hubert to preside over the meeting.

Next, Mr. Dodson introduced Ms. Cindy Loeffler from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). Ms. Loeffler spoke to the Coastal Bend RWPG members about the environmental criteria that must be met as outlined by Senate Bill 1. She summarized the TPWD's role in the water planning process. Ms. Loeffler explained that the RWPG must consider the environmental water needs when developing the regional water plan. She congratulated the Coastal Bend region on their successful efforts in addressing environmental needs. Ms. Loeffler finished by stressing that TPWD's goal is to aid regional water planning groups in minimizing adverse environmental effects to water resources.

Then Mr. Dodson introduced Mr. Randy Williams of TWDB. Mr. Williams spoke to the members about Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Feasibility Investigations. He began by explaining the feasibility investigation steps. These included review and analysis of data, field investigations, and the design and construction of an ASR pilot program. He did mention that TWDB is providing funding for the analyses and field investigations. Mr. Williams then presented the members with results of ASR program results in Brownsville and Laredo. Mr. Bryan Black confirmed that another ASR project is underway in Kerrville.

Finally, Mr. Dodson reported that there was no need for a meeting in December but that the meeting in January would be held on the third Thursday. Mr. Dodson also reported to the members that the drafts of Sections 1 and 2 were still being reviewed by the TWDB and that there would be continued work on groundwater availability. Mr. Flores confirmed that the drafts were being reviewed. Mr. Con Mims stated that there was no report from the South-Central RWPG at that time.

Dr. Hubert asked for any General Public Comment. There was none.

Dr. Hubert set the next meeting date for January 20, 2000.

Mr. Bernard Paulson made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Bernie DeLaune seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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

Minutes Submitted by:

Dr. Patrick Hubert, Secretary

Date

Coastal Bend

RWPG