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TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

April 24, 2017

Mr. Bret Raley
San Jacinto River Authority
Division Manager, Lake Conroe Division
P. O. Box 329
Conroe, Texas 77305

Re: **Pre-Release from Reservoirs**

Dear Mr. Raley:

During our telephone conversation on April 19, 2017, you requested our comments on pre-release from reservoirs before a predicted large rain event. Here are our comments.

We would not recommend pre-release based on weather forecasts. Meteorologists cannot precisely predict how much it is going to rain or exactly where it is going to rain. If pre-release from a reservoir was started based on a prediction of rain upstream of a dam and the rain actually fell downstream of the dam on top of the water that was released, the dam owner could be liable for causing any flooding and water supply would have been wasted.

The general rule in this country is that the operator of a dam may permit floodwaters to pass through the dam in an amount equal to the inflow, but will be liable if any excess amount is discharged. This is the reason the gate operation procedures as prepared by your engineer must be followed every time the gates are operated.

In the case of large rainfalls, it would be difficult to release enough water in advance of the storm, without causing flooding, to allow storage without release during the event.

If you have questions, please feel free to call (512/239-5195).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Warren D. Samuelson".

Warren D. Samuelson, P. E.
Manager, Dam Safety Section
Critical Infrastructure Division, MC-177