



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 22, 2011

CONTACT: Jace Houston
(936) 588-3111

City of Houston May Request Water from Lake Conroe

Although an official notice has not yet been received, the City of Houston has given preliminary indications that it will soon request a measured release of water from its two-thirds share of the water rights in Lake Conroe to meet the City's operational needs in Lake Houston. An exact quantity and start date is not yet known, but initial estimates are that the City might request a release of up to 150 million gallons per day beginning sometime within the next two weeks. This equates to approximately half an inch per day.

Engineering staff for the City of Houston have indicated that the purpose of the release is not to raise the level of Lake Houston but simply to stabilize the lake level for operational needs at the City's Northeast Water Purification Plant. The amount of water requested from Lake Conroe would be adjusted daily based on weather conditions in the Lake Houston watershed, and the releases would likely continue until the current drought conditions begin to abate.

Lake Conroe was built as a joint venture between the City of Houston and the San Jacinto River Authority, with the City owning two-thirds of the water rights in the reservoir, and the SJRA owning the other one-third. In September of 2009, the SJRA and the City executed a long-term water supply contract that secured the SJRA's right to use all of the water in Lake Conroe for the SJRA's countywide Groundwater Reduction Plan (GRP) program. The GRP program will not need a significant amount of the City's water until at least 2025, and during those years in which the City's water is not used by the GRP, the contract allows the City to call on the water for its own short-term uses on a year-by-year basis.

Based on current weather patterns and inflows into Lake Houston, the SJRA does not currently see an immediate need to make any releases from the SJRA's one-third share of Lake Conroe to meet the needs of its own downstream industrial customers; however, if severe drought conditions continue, it may become necessary for the SJRA to release a small amount of water in addition to the City of Houston's release. If this were to occur, the SJRA's release would be relatively small – probably in the range of 10 to 15 million gallons per day (approximately 1/20 of an inch per day or one and a half inches per month). If such releases are required, the SJRA would reimburse the GRP program for the appropriate amount of reservation fees that were paid for the SJRA's share of the water in Lake Conroe.

In terms of impact to the level of Lake Conroe, the estimated release of up to half an inch per day would equate to three or four inches per week. During the hot summer months, this is approximately equal to the amount of water that evaporates from the reservoir. Lakefront property owners with boat slips should monitor water levels and take appropriate action as needed to trailer their boats or store them in marinas until normal rainfall patterns return and lake levels begin to rise.

For additional information, please visit the SJRA's website at www.sjra.net. To receive updates via the internet or email, you can link to our Facebook page from our website or register your email address by signing up using the field in the lower right corner of our home page.

#