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State of Texas Rejects Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District's Proposed Management Plan

Declares that New Board Must Comply with the Law and Cannot Ignore Groundwater Management Goals Approved by Other Districts in the Area

Conroe, Texas —The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) has rejected Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District's (LSGCD) newly proposed groundwater management plan for Montgomery County and instructed it to utilize management goals approved by groundwater districts in surrounding counties.

Texas law requires groundwater conservation districts that share a planning area to jointly approve management goals for the aquifer(s) which they share and subsequently adopt rules that meet those goals based on the approved "modeled available groundwater" (MAG) for each county.

In its proposed management plan, the new Lone Star board claimed there was no approved management goal or MAG for the aquifers in Montgomery County. The TWDB rejected this theory ruling that both management goals and MAGs were in fact approved by the area in 2010 in the form of "desired future conditions" (DFC) adopted by Groundwater Management Area 14 (GMA 14), of which Montgomery County is a member. GMA 14 is made up of 20 southeast Texas counties including Harris, Montgomery, Fort Bend, Brazoria, Chambers, and Galveston.

Lone Star has been instructed to prepare a management plan that includes objectives and performance standards that will achieve the MAGs and DFC approved in 2010 by the members of GMA 14, which allows 61,629 acre-feet per year of groundwater pumpage for Montgomery County. They have 180 days to submit a new plan that meets these standards.

Because of the potential negative impacts from Lone Star's proposal to allow increased pumpage and water-level declines, numerous local water utilities and community leaders submitted comments to the TWDB urging them to reject the proposed management plan. These organizations representing a combined customer base of over 3.5 million residents within and adjacent to Montgomery County include the San Jacinto River Authority, the Woodlands Joint Powers Agency, Montgomery County Water Control and Improvement District #1, the North Harris County Regional Water Authority, the West Harris County Regional Water Authority, the Lake Houston Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Houston.

"Aquifer over-use has real consequences like land subsidence and water reliability problems," said Jace Houston General Manager of the San Jacinto River Authority. "Many entities plan for

our region's water supply. It takes state, city, county, and regional partners. This ruling by the TWDB tells Lone Star they cannot adopt a plan that is out of sync with all other water entities in the region and ultimately harmful to our water supply.”

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