



RESOLUTION OF THE RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (REGION M) URGING THE TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE TO USE THE SENATE BILL 1 (75TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE) REGIONAL WATER PLANNING PROCESS IN CONSIDERING THE SALE OR LEASE OF WATER FROM STATE-OWNED LANDS

WHEREAS, the Texas Legislature has defined a water planning process wherein Regional Water Planning Groups, working with groundwater conservation districts and others, develop plans for the use of the water resources of the state; and

WHEREAS, Regional Water Planning Groups are organized to: address diverse interest groups; represent all water users; consider best available data; coordinate water availability, water demands, population projections, and water management strategies; and prepare a regional water plan based on a fifty year planning horizon; and

WHEREAS, local groundwater districts are the state's preferred method for addressing the planning, protection and management of groundwater resources in the state as defined in Chapter 36, Texas Water Code and the enabling legislation of the individual districts; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Legislature, 75th Session, mandated that all water use strategies affecting the water resources of each region be considered by the Regional Water Planning Groups in developing their water plans; and

WHEREAS, water use strategies considered by the Regional Water Planning Groups to be viable and appropriate for the region must be incorporated in the regional water plan; and

WHEREAS, the Texas General Land Office is considering the lease or sale of groundwater from lands owned by the people of Texas to one or more water marketing entities; and

WHEREAS, it is unclear to what extent the Texas General Land Office has considered the short and long term impacts of the proposed sales or leases on the economy, people, or environment as provided for through Regional Water Planning Process; and

WHEREAS, proposals by the Texas General Land Office to lease or sell groundwater from lands owned by the people of Texas should be presented to affected Regional Water Planning Groups for their consideration and possible incorporation into their Regional Water Plans.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP opposes any effort by the Texas General Land Office to lease or sell, or allow for the leasing or selling, of any groundwater from lands owned by the people of Texas to any entity unless water use strategies are first presented to all affected Regional Water Planning Groups and are subsequently accepted and included as part of their regional water plans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Land Office should comply with all local groundwater district rules and state-certified groundwater management plans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that water development strategies proposed by state agencies involving state lands must be made known to the public and public involvement should be encouraged; and

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that Governor Rick Perry, Lt. Governor David Dewhurst, and House Speaker Tom Craddick are urged to intervene and prevail upon Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the General Land Office, to not agree to the sale or lease of water from lands owned by the people of Texas until a thorough study of the consequences of such actions has been conducted; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that such study and future studies of water strategies initiated by state agencies involving state lands must include, but not be limited to, the impact on:

- the environment in the exporting water planning region, including fish and wildlife habitat, spring flows, and instream flows,
- the value and use of private and public lands in the importing and exporting water planning regions,
- aquifer conditions, potential aquifer depletion, well levels, land subsidence, and long term aquifer sustainability in the exporting water planning region,
- local economies and demographics in the exporting water planning region,
- water resource availability in both the importing and exporting water planning regions, and
- implementation of other water strategies in the importing and exporting water planning regions.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group on this 15th day of March, 2004.

Glenn Jarvis, Chairman

Attest: Mary Lou Campbell, Secretary