

Texas Water

Ft. Worth Star-Telegram

Editorial

July 24, 2001

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But an intense debate on conservation and drought management ended in a stalemate at a recent meeting in Austin. Representatives from agriculture, industry, large cities and rural communities from throughout Texas met with water officials to help formulate proposals for a state water plan.

Suggestions that the Legislature and Texas' 16 regional water planning groups help set conservation goals - designed to reduce per capita use - met opposition from farming and industrial interests and other water users.

They also opposed a proposal that the Legislature require public water utilities to develop conservation plans.

Regardless of whether state lawmakers mandate it, suppliers such as cities and water districts are shortsighted if they don't adopt such plans.

The need to increase conservation should be obvious in a state that periodically has been plagued by crippling droughts - most notably the terrible 1950s drought.

Texas' population is expected to keep mushrooming. That creates a need for more water.

The more that can be saved through conservation, the less money will be needed to build expensive new reservoirs and dams.

North Texans waste enormous amounts of water through foolish lawn watering practices - such as watering in the heat of the day, or watering too frequently but not deeply enough. The Metroplex has the highest per capita water use in the state.

Some water users fear that conservation plans will mean government intervention and restrictions on water use. But conservation planning is crucial to ensuring that adequate water supplies are available for all.