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## **City council concerned about coast**

From staff reports

Orange City Council will consider a resolution today, urging legislators to protect Texas' coastal bays.

The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. today at Orange City Council Chamber at the Orange Public Library, 220 N. Fifth St.

The resolution comes in response to a 2004 National Wildlife Federation report documenting how Texas' growing water demands and its century-old water permitting process threaten vital freshwater inflows to Texas bays.

Five of Texas' seven major bays, including Sabine Lake, received a "danger" ranking in the NWF study, which means their shrimp, crab, oyster and fish populations could be at risk unless the state takes action.

"This is just something that's just good to do. It doesn't cost the city anything," City Manager Shawn Oubre said, adding it raises recognition for the federation's concerns.

The resolution under consideration by City Council does not advocate for a specific approach; it simply asks the Texas Legislature "to develop and enact" legislation protecting inflows during the current session.

Myron Hess, manager of the Texas Water Programs for the National Wildlife Federation, urged the council to pass the resolution.

"Healthy rivers and bays add billions of dollars to the Texas economy every year, but right now they are not adequately protected under state law. Now is the time to make the City of Orange's voice heard on this vital issue," he said.

Hess noted that over the last 100 years, the state has granted permits authorizing 23 million acre-feet of water to be taken from Texas' rivers and streams every year. Many permit-holders are not using their full allotment of water right now, but that will change as the state's population grows. Hess said increased water demands likely will be met largely by using existing water permits more fully. And this means less water will be flowing to the coast.