



For Immediate Release

Conservation Groups React Positively to Senate Bill 3

Three of the state's major conservation organizations reacted positively today to the introduction of omnibus water legislation. Senate Bill 3, carried by Senate Natural Resources Committee Chairman Ken Armbrister, would make some major changes in state water policy.

"The environmental flows provisions of Senate Bill 3 could jump start the effort to move Texas' river management system into the modern era," said Myron Hess, manager of the Texas water programs for the National Wildlife Federation. "The bill would help ensure our children can continue to enjoy healthy rivers and bays as well as the fish and wildlife heritage Texas is famous for."

There is increased recognition of the importance of protecting environmental flows in Texas' rivers. Sixteen coastal communities-places that would be particularly affected if the flows issue is not adequately addressed-have passed resolutions asking the Legislature to take action on environmental flows this session.

Nine counties-including Galveston, Jefferson, Aransas and Matagorda counties-and six cities passed similar resolutions on environmental flows. The resolutions do not endorse any particular legislative approach.

Senate Bill 3 also contains provisions addressing water conservation, groundwater management, and financing for water infrastructure projects.

"It appears that the bill's conservation provisions reflect the broad consensus that water conservation is one of the best ways of meeting the state's water needs," said Ken Kramer, director of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Kramer was a member of a water conservation task force created by the Legislature last session. He said the water conservation provisions in Senate Bill 3 appear to largely implement the recommendations made by the task force, which had broad stakeholder representation.

"This comprehensive bill addresses some very difficult issues the state will be facing now and in the future as our population and water demand grow and we commend the willingness of Senator Armbrister and the lieutenant governor to tackle these critical topics," said Mary Kelly, senior attorney at Environmental Defense.

The groups also expressed hope that the bill's financing provisions will provide adequate funds for water conservation initiatives, better enforcement of water rights, water research, and protection of environmental flows through the Texas Water Trust.

Contacts:

National Wildlife Federation: Myron Hess or Lacey McCormick - 512-476-9805

Environmental Defense: Mary Kelly or Doug Zabel - 512-478-5161

Sierra Club, Lone Star Chapter: Ken Kramer - 512-476-6962 or Donna Hoffman - 512-477-1729

For more about water in Texas, go to www.texaswatermatters.org.

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