

Report Assesses State of Texas Urban Water Conservation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Amy Hardberger, Environmental Defense Fund, 512.691.3437 or Mary Kelly, Environmental Defense Fund, 512.691.3431.

Media Contact: Chris Smith, Environmental Defense Fund, 512.691.3451-w or 512.659.9264-c or csmith@edf.org

(Austin – April 15, 2008) Texas cities can do more to ensure efficient use of water resources, according to a new report from the Environmental Defense Fund. The report found that while a few Texas cities have strong water conservation plans, others are not taking full advantage of strategies to reduce water waste and promote efficiency.

“From Policy to Reality: Maximizing Urban Water Conservation in Texas,” includes an assessment of 18 municipal water conservation plans. The findings show that some of Texas’ largest urban areas have yet to include the state-recommended efficiency target of 140 gallons of water per capita per day in their plans, and some even had five- and 10-year targets that exceed 200 gallons per capita per day.

“These higher targets don’t inspire confidence that the need to improve efficiency is being taken seriously,” said Amy Hardberger, EDF attorney and report author. “There is definitely a need for enhancing awareness and education if we’re to meet the increasing demands that a growing population will place on the state over the next three decades.”

Regarding the use of economic incentives to encourage water conservation, the study found that most of the cities charged an increasing amount per gallon as use increased, also known as “conservation pricing,” but none charged higher prices per gallon when monthly use exceeded an average level for a household of four. “That means that the current rate ordinances don’t really provide the price incentives needed to discourage water gluttons,” Hardberger said.

The EDF report makes several recommendations about how the state, cities and citizens can help Texas achieve the kind of advanced water use efficiency needed. To download a PDF copy of the report, visit: http://www.texaswatermatters.org/pdfs/Texas_Water_Pub_08.pdf. Hardberger will also present more findings at a conference exploring Texas water issues this Friday, April 18. For more information on the conference, visit http://www.texaswatermatters.org/state_water_conference_2008.htm.

###

A leading national nonprofit organization, Environmental Defense Fund represents more than 500,000 members. Since 1967, Environmental Defense Fund has linked science, economics, law and innovative private-sector partnerships to create breakthrough solutions to the most serious environmental problems. For more information, visit www.edf.org.