

Conserving Energy is Fast, Efficient Way to Save Water in Drought-Stricken Texas

*New Report by University of Texas, Environmental Defense Fund
Finds Energy, Water Use Closely Linked*

Contact: Amy Hardberger, Environmental Defense Fund, 512.691.3437-w
Media Contact: Laura Williamson, Environmental Defense Fund, 512.691.3447-w or
512.828.1690-c or lwilliamson@edf.org

(AUSTIN, TX – Apr. 6, 2009) Decisions about supplying energy and water to Texas' growing population can no longer be made in isolation from each other, according to [The Energy-Water Nexus in Texas](#), a joint report released today by the University of Texas and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF).

“Improving water conservation will reduce power demand, and improving energy efficiency will reduce overall water needs – this is key to stretching finite supplies of both while reducing costs for Texans,” said [Amy Hardberger, a report co-author and attorney with the Texas EDF office](#). [See a [video](#) of Hardberger discussing the report here.]

“Failure to consider the links between water and energy could undermine both resources, where constraints in water become constraints in energy, or vice-versa,” said Michael Webber, report co-author and associate director of the University of Texas Center for International Energy & Environmental Policy. “On the other hand, policies that address both energy and water can increase efficiency and reduce costs for Texans.”

[The Energy-Water Nexus in Texas](#) is the first report of its kind to quantify the relationship between electricity generation and water supply in Texas. It analyzes how much water is needed to supply Texans with electricity, including water required for cooling towers and reservoirs at power plants. The report also examines the energy used in supplying and treating water, and includes how climate change could affect both water and power demand and supply reliability.

For example, enough water for more than 3 million people is used in Texas each year to cool the state's thermoelectric power plants. Enough electricity for about 100,000 people goes to water and wastewater systems each year in Texas.

"With a growing population increasing the strain on both energy and water, we must be careful not to implement policies that benefit one resource while unintentionally undermining the other," said Hardberger.

"Collaborative planning among state agencies on Texas' energy and water is absolutely necessary," said Webber, "and it requires Texas to collect more site-specific data regarding power plants' water usage and the energy used to treat and distribute water."

The report makes specific recommendations on how to build a framework for more integrated energy-water planning, including:

1. Require a study to determine how much water is available for use when siting new fossil-fueled or concentrated solar power plants.
2. Require proposed power plants to evaluate cooling technology to minimize water use, while considering effects on power plant efficiency.
3. Provide incentives for implementing power plant cooling technologies that are less water-intensive than traditional systems.
4. Provide state agency guidance to water suppliers to help quantify energy use and cost savings associated with water conservation.

"Different areas of the state may need different solutions," Hardberger said. "Some areas of the state are better suited for different types or combinations of cooling technologies depending on how much water is available in the area, and the region's air quality."

Learn more at www.edf.org/texasenergywater nexus.

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