
Introduction

This chapter defines the purpose of this report and provides an overview. It also identifies the roles and responsibilities of the LCRA Board and the members of the project staff.

1.1 Purpose of Report

This report presents the results and recommendations of the House Bill 1437 Implementation Study. It describes the issues surrounding the transfer of 25,000 acre-feet/year of water from the Lower Colorado River Basin to Williamson County, Texas as authorized under the Texas House Bill 1437 (HB1437).

1.2 Authorization and Responsibilities

This study and the expenditure of funds from the Agriculture Water Conservation Fund were authorized by the LCRA Board in March 2004. Subsequent procurement activities included development of an Interlocal Agreement with The University of Texas at Austin's LBJ School of Public Affairs and a Task Order No. 2 to CH2M Hill. The HB 1437-designated Agriculture Water Conservation Fund Advisory Committee (Ag Committee) remained active. Responsibilities for each are described below.

- UT/LBJ School Responsibilities LBJ School's role has been to convene public meetings, report public comments and advice to the LCRA Board, and make recommendations on definition of "no net loss," water replacement strategies and the surcharge rate based on public comments and advice.
- CH2M Hill Responsibilities CH2M Hill's role is to evaluate different water replacement strategies based on certain decision criteria and calculate the conservation charge.
- Agriculture Water Conservation Fund Committee Ag Committee's role is to consult with the LCRA regarding the use of water conservation funds.

1.3 Overview of Content

The study results are presented in an Implementation Study Report, with attachments, which presents the technical evaluations and supporting documentation. The HB 1437 Implementation Study Report contains 8 chapters which are summarized below.

- Chapter 1. Introduction. The chapter provides a summary of the study's authorization; its objectives, and the roles and responsibilities of the participants.
- Chapter 2. Background. The chapter provides background information on HB 1437. It summarizes the requirements of HB 1437; it introduces the Agriculture Water Conservation Fund Advisory Committee; and describes the Agricultural Water Conservation Fund. The section also provides a brief discussion of the BRA/LCRA contract and the BRA Inter-basin Transfer Permit for HB 1437 Water. The chapter

concludes with the discussion of the relationship between HB 1437 and the LCRA/SAWS Project.

- Chapter 3. Public Participation Process. This chapter describes the public interaction process. The text provides a summary of actions of the project associated with the public. These include the information packages mailed out to the public, the project website, first and second round of public meetings (in Burnet/Marble Falls, Wharton, and Georgetown), and comments/questions received via phone, mail, e-mail or fax. The section evaluates comments from the public meetings. The comments are grouped and discussed under relevant titles, such as: “no net loss,” water replacement strategies, decision criteria, surcharge rate, water rights, implementation, advisory committee, and other comments.
- Chapter 4. Addressing Stakeholder Concerns. This chapter addresses the concerns raised during a total of 10 meetings with the Ag-Committee and the Williamson County water customers since the beginning of the project in March 2004.
- Chapter 5. No Net Loss – Definition and Policy. This chapter discusses the policy and the proposed definition of “no net loss.” The section identifies technical issues regarding “no net loss,” such as usage at other locations and replacement policy.
- Chapter 6. Evaluation of Water Replacement Strategies. This chapter evaluates different water replacement strategies and identifies evaluation and selection criteria. It also introduces a short-term and a long-term alternative for the recommended water replacement strategies. The section discusses the rationale of each recommendation and provides the underlying assumptions and definitions.
- Chapter 7. Evaluation of Implementation alternatives. This chapter introduces alternative short-term and long-term implementation approaches based on existing uncertainties. The section evaluates how well in-division or on-farm water replacement strategies perform under these uncertainties. The section concludes with a list of recommendations for the short-term and the long-term periods.
- Chapter 8. Recommendations. This chapter introduces a short-term implementation model for the recommended strategies. The section includes a discussion of policy, technical issues, construction and budget. This chapter concludes the report by summarizing the outcomes of the study and the recommended solutions.

A list of the 20 attachments to this report is available in the table of contents of the HB 1437 Implementation Study Report. The attached CD contains an electronic version of these attachments.