

Water Management Plan Amendment

Water Operations Committee Meeting
Feb. 18, 2026



LCRA's Water Management Plan

- **Governs LCRA's operation of lakes Buchanan and Travis to supply water to users throughout the lower Colorado River basin**
- **Allows for supply of interruptible water, provided LCRA doesn't impair its ability to meet the needs of its firm customers**
- **Helps meet the environmental needs of the river and bay**

Why Update the Plan?

- **Texas Commission on Environmental Quality order required update process to begin in 2025**
- **To update firm water demands, which have increased**
- **To include updated hydrology through 2023**

Key Requirements for Updated WMP

- **Adjudication order**

- Water may be available on an interruptible basis when firm demand is less than firm yield
- To the extent an interruptible demand exists, stored water should be made available
- Interruptible water should be curtailed to the extent necessary to allow LCRA to satisfy existing and projected firm demands

Key Requirements for Updated WMP

(Continued)

- **TCEQ framework**
 - Plan should curtail interruptible water to maintain minimum storage above 600,000 acre-feet through period of record
 - Plan should include water supply conditions providing for curtailment of interruptible water that incorporate combined storage and inflows
- **WMP TCEQ Order in 2020 requires:**
 - Process designed to allow meaningful input from interested participants

Staff Recommendation for WMP Revision



LCRA Staff Recommendation

- **Meets TCEQ framework**
- **Reflects input from participants**
- **Results in minimum modeled combined storage of about 640,000 acre-feet**

What is Not Changing

- **The basic objectives:**
 - Meet firm demands without shortage
 - Maintain minimum combined storage above 600,000 acre-feet
- **The TCEQ WMP framework:**
 - Three water supply conditions – Normal, Less Severe Drought and Extraordinary Drought
 - Two evaluation dates for interruptible water availability for agriculture
 - Look-ahead tests
 - Environmental flow criteria

Key Changes From Current WMP

- **Interruptible stored water for agriculture recommended changes include:**
 - Normal conditions
 - Reduces maximum allocation to 125,000 acre-feet from 178,000 acre-feet
 - Less Severe Drought
 - Raises trigger to 1.7 million acre-feet from 1.5 million acre-feet combined storage
 - Reduces maximum allocation to 96,000 acre-feet from 155,000 acre-feet
 - Extraordinary Drought
 - Raises trigger to 1.45 million acre-feet from 1.3 million acre-feet combined storage
 - Reduces required duration to 14 months from 18 months
 - Anytime Cutoff
 - Raises trigger to 1.1 million acre-feet from 1 million acre-feet combined storage

Key Changes From Current WMP

(Continued)

- **Environmental flows recommended changes include:**
 - Instream flows
 - Reduces obligations for Columbus and Wharton when combined storage is below 1.3 million acre-feet and below 900,000 acre-feet
 - Raises trigger for Subsistence/Base-Dry from 1.8 million acre-feet to 1.86 million acre-feet combined storage
 - Matagorda Bay inflows
 - Reduces monthly caps on water available to bay
 - Reduces storable inflow percentage available to bay from 60%/50% to 50%/40%

Minimum Combined Storage Results

- **Current WMP with 2032 conditions**
 - About 500,000 acre-feet
- **Proposed WMP with 2032 conditions**
 - About 640,000 acre-feet

Interruptible Agriculture Results: First Crop Season

Demand Category/Parameter	Current WMP With 2032 Conditions	Proposed WMP With 2032 Conditions	Units
Maximum stored water made available first crop season	178,000	125,000	a-f
Number of years full first crop stored water supplied	65	58	years
Number of years partial curtailed or ran out midseason	7	10	years
Number of years no stored water available for first crop	12	16	years

Interruptible Agriculture Results: Second Crop Season

Demand Category/Parameter	Current WMP With 2032 Conditions	Proposed WMP With 2032 Conditions	Units
Maximum stored water made available second crop	66,000	66,000	a-f
Number of years full second crop stored water supplied	64	57	years
Number of years partial curtailed or ran out midseason	3	8	years
Number of years no stored water available for second crop	17	19	years

Environmental Flow Results

- **Instream flow results**
 - Subsistence attainment continues at 99% or better
 - Changes in attainment compared with current WMP of 0% to -4%
- **Matagorda Bay inflow results:**
 - Threshold attainment of 96%
 - Changes in attainment compared with 2020 WMP of 0% to -4%

Participant and Public Input

Participant and Public Input Process

- **Participant process throughout 2025**
 - Hosted six participant meetings
 - Accepted comments and provided responses following each meeting
 - Posted meeting materials, comments and responses on LCRA.org
- **LCRA Board and Water Operations Committee meetings:**
 - November 2024; February, June and September 2025; January and February 2026
- **Public comment period Jan. 5 to Feb. 3, 2026**

Input and Changes During Participant Process

- **Updated firm customer demands**
- **Confirmed that firm customer drought response measures are not included in model**
- **Changed trigger for switching instream flow criteria**
- **Changed triggers for entering Less Severe Drought and Extraordinary Drought**

Comments From the Public

- **More than 500 comments received**
- **Major concerns:**
 - Protections for firm water customers
 - Supply for agriculture and environmental flows
 - Conservation and drought response requirements and out-of-basin use
 - Flexibility of WMP and timing of future updates
 - Future supplies

Comments About Firm Customer Protection

- **Raise minimum combined storage**
- **Address dry years, low inflows and historic droughts**
- **Protect drinking water supply**
- **Protect fixed-intake communities in upper Lake Travis and Lake Buchanan**
- **Concern over high growth and data centers**

Response to Comments About Firm Customer Protection

- **WMP maintains minimum combined storage over 600,000 acre-feet to be available in event of Drought Worse Than Drought of Record**
- **WMP uses TCEQ-approved hydrology through 2023, the most recent year available for this revision, including 1950s drought and recent Drought of Record**
- **Water supply reservoirs must fluctuate to develop supply; intakes must be able to respond to the fluctuations**
- **Proposed WMP includes significant additional demand; firm demands for hot/dry years are 31% higher – or about 110,000 acre-feet higher – than the highest use since 2020**

Comments About Supplying Water for Agriculture and Environment

- **Further reduce or eliminate interruptible supply for agriculture**
- **Further reduce releases of water for environmental flows downstream of Lake Travis**

Response to Comments About Supplying Water for Agriculture and Environment

- **Agricultural use is recognized by the state as a beneficial use of water**
- **Adjudication order provides that when firm demand is less than firm supply, interruptible water should be made available**
 - **Interruptible water is subject to being cut back or cut off during drought to enable LCRA to continue to meet firm demands**
- **Adjudication order requires LCRA to provide water for environmental flows**
- **LCRA has a firm water commitment to help meet environmental flow needs**

Comments About Conservation, Drought Response and Out-of-Basin Use

- **Water conservation and drought response should be promoted and enforced to a greater degree, including limitations on watering or having grass lawns**
- **Concern that Colorado River supplies are being used outside the basin in Williamson County**
- **All customers should follow all provisions of LCRA's drought contingency plan**

Response to Comments About Conservation, Drought Response and Out-of-Basin Use

- **LCRA is exploring additional water conservation measures, including limitations on watering grass lawns**
- **LCRA's service area includes Williamson County, and customers have been served in that county since the 1980s and 1990s**
- **The drought contingency plan exception to requiring a once-per-week watering restriction is limited to retail providers that obtain less than 25% of their supply from Colorado River basin**

Comments About Flexibility of WMP and Potential Future Revisions

- **WMP should be responsive to changing conditions**
- **LCRA should reopen the WMP earlier than planned if conditions worsen**

Response to Comments About Flexibility of WMP and Timing of Future Updates

- **Proposed WMP includes earlier engagement of Less Severe Drought and Extraordinary Drought conditions**
- **Proposed WMP reduces supply to interruptible agricultural customers and environment**
- **Order approving WMP includes triggers for updating WMP, and LCRA supports the next order including an additional trigger based on drought conditions that are worse than we have experienced**

Comments About LCRA Supplies

- **Concern that LCRA firm supply may be fully committed**
- **LCRA should develop additional supplies**

Response to Comments About LCRA Supplies

- **Arbuckle Reservoir recently added to firm inventory**
- **Uncommitted firm supply is available**
- **LCRA's Water Supply Resource Report identifies potential projects that LCRA may pursue to add supplies**

Comments Outside Scope of WMP

- **Impacts to property values and lake-area businesses**
- **Aquifer/groundwater issues**
- **Limit growth**
- **Restrict rock quarries**
- **Improve navigation safety**
- **Address vehicles in lakebed**

Next Steps

- **Board consideration of proposed revisions – today**
- **Submit application to TCEQ – March 2026**



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