
LCRA BOARD POLICY

501 – WATER RESOURCES

Oct. 21, 2025

501.10 PURPOSE

This policy establishes guidelines for implementing LCRA's responsibilities regarding: water supply management, planning and development; water conservation; environmental flows; water quality protection; water contracts and rates; and the temporary lowering of LCRA-operated lakes.

501.20 WATER SUPPLY MANAGEMENT, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

501.201 Water Supply. LCRA will take initiative in appropriate management, planning, programs and projects to control, store, preserve, use, develop, conserve and manage the water supplies under its jurisdiction. To guide this effort, LCRA will adhere to the following general principles:

1. As a regional water supplier, LCRA will, where practically feasible, cooperate with regional efforts to benefit the Colorado River basin.
2. LCRA will optimize its water supply by managing its available water supplies with a basinwide perspective of ensuring firm water supplies are available during an extended drought while continuing to make interruptible supplies available whenever possible. With regard to water stored in lakes Buchanan and Travis, LCRA will achieve this objective, in part, through the development and implementation of its state-approved Water Management Plan.
3. While maximizing the potential supplies available from its Colorado River water rights in an economically feasible manner, LCRA may consider development of new, economically feasible supplies to serve its customers.
4. LCRA will monitor developments affecting water law, water rights permitting and federal regulation of water resources and, where necessary, take action to ensure the legal rights and obligations LCRA has as a regional water supplier are not significantly and adversely affected by such activities.
5. LCRA will explore opportunities to improve the reliability of water supply for agricultural needs through diverse, economically feasible strategies that increase available supply in the lower basin while minimizing the impact on firm water customers.

6. A preference for a basinwide approach will be given when pursuing water supply strategies.

501.202 Public Engagement. LCRA will provide information to the public about plans for future water supply projects and will solicit feedback from the public in the decision-making process. LCRA's public engagement process may include the use of one or more of the following: advisory committees, community forums, town hall meetings or open houses, media outreach, dedicated webpages, online feedback forms, and other strategies, as appropriate, in addition to any applicable regulatory agency-required public process. The timing, scope and details of LCRA's public engagement process for any specific project will be determined by the general manager (GM)/CEO or his or her designee and will depend on the size and nature of the project.

For example, for any new water supply project that is expected to create 10,000 acre-feet or more per year, staff may:

- Meet with stakeholder groups and, as appropriate, individuals to provide information about the proposed project, answer questions and solicit input.
- Create a dedicated webpage designed to educate the public about the proposed project and to solicit input from stakeholders and other interested participants. The webpage may provide information relevant to the proposed project, including meeting presentations, participant comments and LCRA's responses, and appropriate technical information.
- Provide periodic progress reports to the Water Operations Committee in public meetings of the committee, including reports on feedback and input received from the public.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring the disclosure of information that is protected under Texas open government laws.

501.30 WATER CONSERVATION

LCRA will meet or exceed state water conservation requirements and provide leadership in promoting the conservation of water. LCRA's commitment to conserving water will be achieved by implementing a variety of programs designed to encourage the conservation of water.

501.40 ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS

LCRA is committed to maintaining, and where reasonably possible, improving fish, wildlife and recreation resources within the lower Colorado river basin and Matagorda Bay system. LCRA will continue to be a leader in developing high-quality science on environmental flows for the benefit of the lower Colorado River basin consistent with all legal requirements and Board policies. LCRA will provide water to help meet environmental flow needs in a manner that does not diminish or hamper its ability to meet current and future water demands of other beneficial users in the basin.

501.50 WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

LCRA will provide leadership in protecting water quality and, where reasonably possible, improving the quality of the surface water and groundwater within the lower Colorado River watershed. LCRA will seek to protect against degradation of water quality and will support recreation, aquatic life and water supply uses of the waters under its jurisdiction. LCRA will implement this goal through monitoring, assessment, advocacy, contracting, regulatory oversight, and reliance on the best available science, technology and innovation. LCRA will cooperate with other concerned public and private entities to help address issues of concern related to water quality within the lower Colorado River watershed, including groundwater.

501.60 WATER CONTRACTS AND RATES

501.601 Water Contracts. LCRA will adopt and implement reasonable rules for the consideration, issuance, and fair and appropriate administration of raw water contracts consistent with all legal requirements and Board policies. The GM/CEO or his or her designee shall develop standard contract terms and conditions consistent with all legal requirements, Board policies and rules.

501.602 Water Rates. LCRA's rates will be just and reasonable, not unduly discriminatory, and set to fully recover LCRA's costs to control, store, preserve, conserve, use, plan, develop, manage, distribute and sell the water supplies under its jurisdiction, consistent with state law. The rates will be designed to allow LCRA to be self-supporting in providing these services and with the goal of providing for a stable and predictable source of revenue.

501.603 Board Consideration and Public Input. Implementation of new rates will be carried out within a time frame that attempts to minimize adverse impacts upon the customers of LCRA. All contract rules and rates will be presented to the LCRA Board of Directors for approval, and the public, including all water customers, will be afforded an opportunity to comment on such actions before the Board's consideration for approval.

501.70 LOWERING LCRA-OPERATED LAKES

The GM/CEO may authorize the temporary lowering of Inks Lake, Lake LBJ, Lake Marble Falls and Lake Austin only if such lowering will not interfere with LCRA's essential operations, unreasonably impact aquatic habitat or result in any unrecovered losses related to water supply and are otherwise consistent with LCRA's water rights and existing contracts and leases. Any lowering of Lake Austin or any lowering of Inks Lake, Lake LBJ or Lake Marble Falls that occurs with a frequency of more than once every four years shall not result in any unreasonable losses related to hydroelectric revenues as determined by the GM/CEO or his or her designee. The GM/CEO may approve a lowering of a lake on a more frequent basis than allowed above if the GM/CEO determines it is necessary to address health and safety concerns associated with major flood events or maintenance or repairs at LCRA-owned or operated facilities.

501.80 AUTHORITY

Texas Water Code, chapters 11 and 12

Texas Special District Local Laws Code sections 8503.001, 8503.004, 8503.0105, 8503.011, 8503.012, 8503.013, 8503.028, 8503.029 and 8503.030

EFFECTIVE: Dec. 15, 2010. Amended Sept. 21, 2016; Aug. 21, 2019; and Oct. 21, 2025.