# Water Management Plan Amendment

## Water Operations Committee Meeting

## Jan. 28, 2026

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# 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 required update process to begin in 2025
- To include updated hydrology through 2023
- To update firm water demands, which have increased

# Key Requirements for 2032 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 2032 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

- **2020 WMP Order requires:**
  - Process designed to allow meaningful input from interested participants

# Update Process

# Update Process to Date

- **Spring 2025**
  - LCRA updated demands to 2032
  - LCRA extended hydrology through 2023

- **Summer 2025**
  - LCRA drafted an initial approach that meets TCEQ framework by:
    - Reducing interruptible stored water allocations to meet demand of second-highest year
    - Raising trigger levels for entering Less Severe Drought and Extraordinary Drought
    - Reducing instream flow obligations at Wharton and Columbus
    - Reducing monthly caps and release percentages for bay criteria

# Update Process to Date (Continued)

- **Summer-fall 2025:**
  - LCRA accepted input from participants
- **November 2025:**
  - Staff responded to comments, presented additional modeling and shared the recommended approach
- **December 2025:**
  - Staff responded to comments from the November meeting
- **Throughout the process:**
  - Staff met individually (about 20 meetings) with various interest groups (environmental, agricultural, City of Austin, Central Texas Water Coalition, Highland Lakes Firm Water Cooperative Coalition)

# 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 2020 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
    - 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
    - Reduces required duration to 14 months from 18 months
  - Anytime Cutoff
    - Raises trigger to 1.1 million acre-feet from 1.0 million acre-feet

# Key Changes From 2020 WMP (Continued)

- **Environmental flows recommended changes include:**
  - Instream flows
    - Reduces obligations for Columbus and Wharton when below 1.3 million acre-feet and 900,000 acre-feet
    - Raises trigger for Subsistence/Base-Dry from 1.8 million acre-feet to 1.86 million acre-feet
  - 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

- **2020 WMP with 2032 conditions**
  - About 500,000 acre-feet
- **2032 WMP recommendation**
  - About 640,000 acre-feet

# Interruptible Agriculture Results: First Crop Season

| Demand Category/Parameter | 2020 WMP With 2032 Conditions | 2032 WMP Recommendation | Units |
|---|---|---|---|
| Max 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 mid-season | 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 | 2020 WMP With 2032 Conditions | 2032 WMP Recommendation | Units |
|---|---|---|---|
| Max 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 mid-season | 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 2020 WMP of 0% to -4%

- **Matagorda Bay inflow results:**
  - Threshold attainment of 96%
  - Changes in attainment compared with 2020 WMP of 0% to -4%

# Opportunities for Comment

- **Public comment period on staff's recommendation to the LCRA Board:** Jan. 5-Feb. 3

- **Staff is available to meet upon request**

# Timeline

| Timing | Action |
|---|---|
| **January 2025** | Initiated process and met with TCEQ |
| **March-December 2025** | Had six participant group meetings and about 20 individual meetings with specific basin interest groups |
| **Jan. 5-Feb. 3, 2026** | Staff recommendation posted for public comment |
| **Jan. 27, 2026** | Present staff recommendation on WMP update to LCRA Board |
| **Feb. 18, 2026** | Request LCRA Board approval |
| **March 2026** | Submit to TCEQ for approval |


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