

May 10, 2013 - An Open Letter To:

The Honorable David Dewhurst, Lieutenant Governor of Texas and
Leader of the Texas Senate

The Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the Texas House of
Representatives

Re: Rainy Day Reservoirs Waiting for A Rainy Day

Honorable Gentlemen:

In the April 29, 2013 edition of the *Houston Chronicle*, the front page headline reads "Reservoirs could leave residents high and dry" and its lead article by Matthew Tresaugue confirms that the legislature's plan to fund reservoir construction only makes sense if they are constructed east of I-45.

In the May 1st edition of the Chronicle at City & State B2, Matthew Tresaugue reports that Texas House Speaker Joe Straus remains committed to "investing billions on new reservoirs" and "working with others to fund... the state's long range water plan.

In my opinion, the operative words that you and your his fellow lawmakers should consider in examining the state's present long-range water plan is "good investment", especially if, primarily due to man-made climate change, our never ending Texas drought continues to decrease the rainfall needed to fill those billion dollar reservoirs that take years to build and water grabbing developers continue to import huge volumes of water from rural aquifers that hard working taxpaying families, farmers, ranchers, and small businesses need to survive and make a living that will take decades if not centuries to replenish despite often illusory references to an aquifer's "recharge rate" .

I submit that the Texas legislature would far better serve Texans and Texas if they fought for a state water plan that invested in the following order of much higher priorities than reservoir building throughout the state:

1. implementing water conservation measures statewide like San Antonio's water conservation planning of years past which made it possible for San Antonio to serve its present population that has since doubled while using about the same amount of water available when the plan was first adopted.

2. stopping the present onslaught of hydraulic fracturing companies and subdivision developers attempts to export huge volumes of water in perpetuity from rural aquifers that, if left unchecked, will only serve to create ghost towns and a waste land between Houston and Austin and increase the price of water to urban Texans held hostage by the resulting monopolized water contracts.

3. converting wastewater to drinking water.

4. replacing water guzzling coal fired power plants like the aging Fayette Power Project, where, probably not coincidentally, one of the most intense areas of drought in Texas can be found, with drought proof clean electricity producing alternatives like solar and wind that use no water and supplemented during peak demand periods with relatively clean natural gas that uses far less water than coal.

5. building water pipelines from existing reservoirs presently found east of Interstate 45 that have a past and present record of having sufficient rainfall to fill.

6. constructing desalination plants and water pipelines to provide drinking water for large urban areas.

7. managing the flow of the Colorado River to protect three key elements of our Texas economy and environment, namely irrigation water for farmers, the wetlands, estuaries, and bays for fishing both commercial and recreational, and avoiding damage and catastrophe at the South Texas Nuclear Power Plant, which management is possible if the preceding list of priorities are addressed.

In my opinion, only after making the above investments, should you consider "investing", albeit at great risk and cost, in more reservoirs east of I-45 with water pipelines extending to other areas of the State.

On the other hand, spending the tax dollars of hard working taxpayers cached in the "Rainy Day" fund on new reservoirs west of I-45, except on a limited basis for irrigation of crops, is simply throwing good money after bad like the LCRA's potentially hazardous and prohibitively costly plan to construct a reservoir on thousands of acres from which lignite containing huge volumes of toxic metals was mined in the Rockdale area of Texas.

For the same reason, any building of reservoirs in the area between Austin and Houston should be rejected because that "investment" would almost certainly be a government boondoggle of the greatest proportions due to the resulting huge condemnation costs of taking some of the highest priced rural property in the state, loss of property tax revenues therefrom needed to sustain rural schools and local governments, and the loss of some of the most productive farm land in the State of the Colorado River valley basin.

Texans for Responsible Energy & Water (TREW), whose website address is www.BeTREWtoTexas.com, was recently formed to enable Texans to meaningfully impact the decisions made by their state lawmakers and to understand and share solutions to our State's water crisis. At TREW we are working to unite Texans from all walks of life across the State to pressure our state lawmakers to make good and fair water and energy decisions for all Texans and not just well connected and well funded special interest groups and to hold our state lawmakers accountable should they fail to do so.

Hopefully, instead of rushing to fund what could very well be an epic government boondoggle, our rural and urban lawmakers under your leadership will work together to establish the above priorities and investment choices and to reject the folly of wasting billions of our taxpayer dollars of the "Rainy Day" fund to build reservoirs west of I-45 that will endlessly wait for a "Rainy Day" to fill!

Very truly yours,

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