
PRESS RELEASE



Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FEBRUARY 13, 2007 - - The Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District (LSGCD) yesterday adopted the next phase of its District Regulatory Plan (DRP), Phase II (A), which requires certain large groundwater users in Montgomery County to conduct a long-term self-assessment of water demands and supplies for their system needs over the next 40 years. Single-family residences, agricultural users, and other users of less than 10 million gallons per year are exempt from the planning requirement.

During Phase I of the DRP, which was adopted in late 2006, the LSGCD established a benchmark for the reduction of groundwater production within Montgomery County by requiring total groundwater production to be reduced to 64,000 acre-feet or less annually by January 1, 2015. Total groundwater demand in Montgomery County is presently greater than 78,000 acre-feet and increasing annually, resulting in increased land subsidence and groundwater declines in the local aquifers.

"With the January 1, 2015, groundwater reduction deadline approaching, we believe it is necessary to begin a critical assessment of how the groundwater users in Montgomery County are planning to meet their future water demands and achieve the impending groundwater reductions," said Kathy Turner Jones, General Manager for the LSGCD. "Hopefully, this will give the average citizen peace of mind in knowing that we are planning today to ensure that their children and grandchildren will have adequate water supplies."

Group plans that are jointly developed between numerous water users are encouraged and expected by the LSGCD, but not mandatory. The San Jacinto River Authority has already released a proposal to numerous Montgomery County water stakeholders offering to join together in the submission of a group plan to the LSGCD.

"We want the water users of Montgomery County to have options and flexibility on where they get their future water supplies," said Orval Love, District Board President. "However, because of the length of time it takes to design and construct alternative water supplies, we also need to have all of those options on the table and identified, so that the District can ensure that the water users are making incremental progress," he said. "The 2015 deadline to reduce groundwater pumping will be here before you know it."

By 2015, the LSGCD anticipates that the total groundwater demand in Montgomery County will reach approximately 88,000 acre-feet. The DRP adopted yesterday will require large water systems to estimate their population and water demand projections for the year 2015 and each ten years after that through 2045. They are then required to identify water supplies to meet those demands that include a groundwater supply component of only 70 percent of their 2015 demand level. The remaining 30 percent and future growth will have to come from alternative supplies.

"This is a process very similar to what the Subsidence District did in Harris County," said Rigby Owen, Jr., Chairman of the LSGCD's Surface Water Conversion Task Force. "We have carefully analyzed their programs and regulations and tried to borrow from their successes."

The District will use the planning and technical information gathered through these Water Resources Assessment Plans (WRAPs) to determine the most appropriate regulatory approach for groundwater reductions. The final plans are due to the LSGCD in March 2009.

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