

FIRST ROUGH DRAFT

CERTIFIED WATER CONSERVATION TRAINING GROUP

(Workgroup 5)

Findings and Preliminary Recommendations

Under Section 3 of House Bill 4 and Section 2.03 of Senate Bill 3, 80th Texas Legislature, the Water Conservation Advisory Council is charged with the following:

DESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED WATER CONSERVATION TRAINING FACILITIES STUDY. (a) The council shall conduct a study to evaluate the desirability of requiring the board to:

- (1) designate as certified water conservation training facilities entities and programs that provide assistance to retail public utilities in developing water conservation plans under Section 13.146; and
 - (2) give preference to certified water conservation training facilities in making loans or grants for water conservation training and education activities.
- (b) Not later than December 1, 2008, the council shall submit a written report containing the findings of the study and the recommendations of the council to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives.
- (c) This section expires June 1, 2009.

Key Concepts and Requirements of the Legislation

- The Council believes that the primary intent of the legislation was directed to providing assistance to and the training of **RETAIL PUBLIC UTILITIES** so that they may meet the requirements for the development of water conservation plans required under Section 134.146.
- As stated in the legislation, another intent is to allow the **Texas Water Development Board** (TWDB) to designate specific facilities, entities, and programs as being certified for water conservation training.

- Another intent is for the TWDB to be able to give preference to those certified facilities, entities, and programs if and when the TWDB can provide financial assistance for water conservation training and education activities.
- The Water Conservation Advisory Council must provide the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Legislature with the findings and recommendations of the Council.

Key Findings and Conclusions

- The legislation is **NOT** directed to the provision of water conservation education and training activities for the general public.
- The legislation is **NOT** directed to the training that would be required for the certification of water conservation professionals.
- The legislation is **NOT** directed to the development of an operator certification program for water conservation specialists.
- The legislation **DOES** address the certification of means (facilities, entities, and programs) to train utilities on how to establish effective conservation programs as required in Texas Water Code Section 134.146.
- Training for retail public utilities for the development of water conservation plans required by Section 13.146 **IS NEEDED**.
- Entities that have provided water conservation training in the past range from state agencies including the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to organizations such as the Texas Rural Water Association (TRWA), Texas Water Utilities Association (TWUA), and the Texas Section of the American Water Works Association (TX-AWWA). It is also conceivable that private entities could perform such training for profit.
- Texas is a large and diverse State. Many not-for-profit organizations already offer some related training as part of their regular conference and program activities across Texas. These programs are held at hotels, local utility training facilities, convention centers at a variety of locations across Texas. This format has proven to be both cost effective and it offers this training to the widest number of utilities as apposed to training at a set building or facility that may be located far from many utilities who wish to send personnel for training. Providing financial assistance to these training **PROGRAMS** as apposed to funding an individual building or facility should be the emphasis of any financial assistance.
- Entities such as TRWA, TX-AWWA, TWUA and others, possibly including for-profit training programs, should be required to submit their programs to the TWDB for approval and certification to ensure that standards are met and proper information is being provided. This practice is currently done by the TCEQ for operator training credits for continuing education requirements and has been effective. Again, this program is aimed at training utilities, and **NOT** certifying conservation professionals, but the certification **process** could be similar.

- Certification **MUST** be a requirement for any type of financial assistance from the TWDB.
- The assistance from the TWDB can be in the form of monetary assistance, but could also include provision of training material, provision of TWDB staff to provide training to the trainers, and/or other forms of in-kind assistance.
- The TWDB currently provides limited training in this area, but it does not have authorization to certify programs, to provide funding of certified training programs, or for the additional staff needed to administer such a program.
- Additional funding will be required for the TWDB to meet this expanded role.

Key Recommendations

- The emphasis should be on certification and provision of assistance to programs of instruction and development of materials that provide the necessary information to assist utilities in developing effective conservation plans as required under Section 13.146 and **NOT** on a specific building or facility.
- In order to be eligible for any type of assistance from the Texas Water Development Board, such training programs **MUST** be certified by the TWDB.
- The certification should be for the program and its content and **NOT** for the certification of a physical facility or entity at a specific location.
- The training should focus on tools, techniques, and methods that go into the development and implementation of effective utility based water conservation plans and programs. This can range from content aimed at specifics of the requirements under Section 13.146 and to program elements such as development of educational programs, outdoor and indoor water conservation program elements, or development of non-residential water conservation programs.
- Additional program authorization **AND FUNDING** will be required, to enable the TWDB to put this certification into practice. This includes both funding for financial assistance and for additional staff activities by the Board.