

11/1/07

Time Start: 10:05 am

Time Stop: 10:45 am

Teleconference Call:

Work Group 5 ~ Conduct a study to determine level of desirability of requiring the TWDB to certify training facilities/programs which would provide assistance to water utilities in developing their water conservation plans.

Council Participants

Spokesperson Bill Hoffman

C.E. Williams

Carole Baker

Bill Hoffman

Ken Petersen

Comer Tuck

TWDB Staff Sitting In

Vanessa Escobar

Aung Hla

John Sutton

C.E. Williams started the meeting off and asked for nominations for a spokesperson. Bill Hoffman was nominated and selected.

Discussion took place about current certification programs. Currently most are set up through professional organizations, university extensions, or state agencies. One of the things that Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) does is to certify classroom training and online training courses for professional licenses.

The group asked, will there be interest in such a course or program? Will it be a requirement to get a load or financial assistance from the state?

Carole informed the group that this is one of the goals of the Alliance for Water Efficiency. The AWE, along with American Water Works Association, feels it important to look at this effort because there is a new upcoming generation of young professionals who will be the recipients in the transfer of knowledge. Providing more training and certification programs will assist in fulfilling this need.

There was some discussion about the interpretation of the legislation, and what are the underlying intentions of the legislation. There was also some discussion as to which type of entity should the training program be run through: university, state, professional organizations or private?

Some questions were asked by the group:

What type of training curriculum needs to be developed?

Will it be utilized for conservation oriented professionals or management level executives?

Will this training program be a required certification for professional, or a professional development type of resource?

How do we keep the training uniform for all attendees i.e. rural water planner, municipal planners?

The group had the opinion that if they knew where this language came from then they would have a better idea of the direction to go with this. One concern for the group was if there are any previous visions for this task that they may need to know before they proceed further.

The group spent some time further reviewing the exact wording of the legislation. The wanted to decipher the exact charge along with the predicted goals/ intentions of a potential certified training program.

Comer Tuck suggested that the work group look at this in two parts: 1) consider the desirability of having certified training programs and 2) decide the best place to locate certified programs.

The question was asked, is this something that is being done similarly in an area of the TWDB, if not maybe the TCEQ or Texas Department of Licenses and Regulations would be better options to administer the certifying of entities.

There was some further explanation about the differences between what is being done now with the TWDB and what this piece of legislation is asking. In the conservation division at TWDB, staff currently provides assistance to municipalities with their conservation plans. This legislation is asking what the desirability would be of the TWDB certifying entities/programs. These programs would be intended to provide assistance to municipalities.

Ken Petersen stated that he would send an email to legislative staff and ask what was meant by "certified facility". The group agreed that they would proceed further once they got this response and would go from there in scheduling the next conference call.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.

Immediate Actions	Long Term Actions
The group will wait for a response from legislative staff and will proceed further in planning the next conference call at that point.	