

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Workgroup Meeting and Conference Call
Workgroup:

Date: November 12, 2019
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Location: Conference Call

<u>Members</u>	<u>Alternates</u>	<u>Interested Parties</u>	<u>TWDB Staff</u>
Charles Ring	David Villareal TJ Helton	Darren Turley John Bender Samantha Borgstedt Stacy Pandey	Brooke Paup Patrick Lopez Cameron Turner John Sutton Josh Sendejar

** Documents can be found at: www.savetexaswater.org/meeting/workgroup/agricultural.html

- I. Introduction of Participants
The call began at 2:36 p.m.

- II. Discussion of Potential Legislative Recommendations
Josh began the discussion by outlining the reporting writing process for the WCAC. Previously, the body of the report was drafted first followed by the legislative recommendations. With the upcoming report, the Council has decided to draft and finalize the legislative recommendations prior to developing the body of the report, in the hope of being able to collaborate with appropriate state agencies on the legislative recommendations.

Josh asked the workgroup if there were any ideas for potential legislative recommendations for the upcoming report. He also mentioned that there were three legislative recommendations from the 2018 report that could be brought forward for the upcoming report. A brief summary of the previous recommendations relating to Ag were given. A document with the three recommendations can be found at the link above.

One participant asked whether any of the other workgroups had brought up the presentation from Dr. Guy Fipps for consideration for a recommendation. Josh answered that no, at this time none of the other workgroups have brought up the ET network for consideration as a legislative recommendation.

Discussion then focused on the recommendation from the 2018 report focusing on restoring funding for the Texas Ag Water Efficiency Education and Demonstration Project facility. One participant mentioned that another project, the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation, will also soon experience the expiration of their current state funding commitment. Another participant expressed that like both of these individual projects,

there are also conservation programs that could benefit from maintaining and/or restoring funding.

Charles Ring mentioned that in his area and other agricultural regions in the state, the economy is dependent on water and local control is important to maintain access to those water resources. There is also a continued need for conservation and efficiency, as well as funding for agricultural research. It was discussed that perhaps that language/sentiment could be worked into the second recommendation (*Maintain funding for agricultural water conservation and research programs.*). Additionally, the workgroup could reach out to agricultural researchers within the academic community to help identify other water resource research funding needs.

Other discussion topics included the fact that some federal regulations are counter-productive to conservation efforts. One specific instance deals with the federal crop insurance program requirement that agricultural producers continue irrigating crops while waiting for a crop insurance adjuster to officially deem a crop as “failed” due to severe drought. The group also briefly discussed the possibility of including language in the report about the U.S./Mexico water treaty and how compliance can impact water availability and conservation efforts in the irrigation districts in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Discussion was brought up that perhaps the Council could draft recommendation(s) for the state legislature to issue a policy statement(s) regarding those particular issues.

Josh then asked if there were other ideas for recommendations.

It was brought up that state agencies could provide up-to-date info regarding conservation programs that might inform Council members discussion on potential recommendations.

III. Discussion of Potential Items for Inclusion in the 2020 Legislative Report

Josh brought up that as the Council gears up for the next legislative report, the Council could hopefully use the change in procedure to develop context for the finalized recommendations within the body of the report. This would hopefully provide all the necessary information, including identifying the achievements, funding or resource needs regarding any recommendation in the report, making the case for the recommendation prior to the formal recommendation itself.

IV. Other Discussion

No other discussion was brought up during the call.

V. Adjourn

The call ended at 2:58 p.m.