

## ***TCEQ Discusses Drought, May 2012***

### **Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., TCEQ Chairman**

We've seen some areas that had almost zero rainfall for the entire calendar year.

### **Toby Baker, TCEQ Commissioner**

Since 2011, as we saw the effects of the drought spreading throughout the state, we knew this wasn't going to be your ordinary dry spell.

### **Chief Nim Kidd, CEM®, Texas Division of Emergency Management**

My fear is, the further we get away from any disaster—even as little as a year—the more we forget about that disaster.

We're still in a drought.

### **Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., TCEQ Chairman**

It's been extremely tough. We really need this drought to be broken, but probably more importantly, we need to make sure we're planning appropriately.

### **Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., TCEQ Chairman**

Getting ahead of the drought is critical. It's kind of the same thing with managing our finances: By the time that there's no money in the bank, it's a little late then to begin thinking about saving money.

### **Carlos Rubinstein, TCEQ Chairman**

You look at San Antonio for example: having seen a roughly 67 percent growth in population and still being able to meet their demands. And they do that because of increased awareness.

### **Chief Nim Kidd, CEM®, Texas Division of Emergency Management**

We've got to constantly drive that message home, that this is a water shortage period. We've got to change the way that we live on a daily basis. We have to change the way that we run our businesses and we have to do a better job of communicating at all levels.

### **Toby Baker, TCEQ Commissioner**

Jobs are going to continue to be a part of life in the state of Texas. I think we all know that. So, we need to get serious about how we treat water and water conservation.

**Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., TCEQ Chairman**

We have to fill our responsibility with regard to ensuring water rights are met and we have to fulfill our obligation to the state.

**Carlos Rubinstein, TCEQ Chairman**

It's not lost on us—what it means to tell somebody they can no longer divert water. If you're talking about a farmer, you do that at the wrong time, you've effectively killed his crop ... You do that with a city, you've just created a horrible, public-health emergency ... These are part of the tough decisions that we tackle each day with each drought.

**Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., TCEQ Chairman**

And that's going to become an even greater challenge moving forward as the demands on our water supply intensify.

**Chief Nim Kidd, CEM®, Texas Division of Emergency Management**

Making sure that we have factual, real-time, up-to-date information is critical in all decision-making processes.

**Toby Baker, TCEQ Commissioner**

Governor Perry signed a disaster declaration, which provided immediate assistance to local communities and water systems.

**L'Oreal W. Stepney, P.E., TCEQ Deputy Director, Office of Water**

We put boots on the ground. We mobilized our key technical staff to provide onsite technical assistance. One of the biggest things that we've done in this drought was helping cut through red tape by coordinating with other state agencies. We look for different funding options for that community, and we look most importantly for alternative water sources.

**Toby Baker, TCEQ Commissioner**

We're going to continue to have efforts and programs in place to help communities that are still dealing with possible water shortages.

**Carlos Rubinstein, TCEQ Chairman**

We put all that information in a very—what I consider to be a top-notch Web page—that allows people to go and identify and get their questions answered there. But, they can also call us. We also established an 800 hotline for folks to call in and ask any kind of question they may have.

**L'Oreal W. Stepney, P.E., TCEQ Deputy Director, Office of Water**

We have great folks working in the field and here in Austin on the drought. We have our leadership involved. We're working with local communities. We have the county extension agents.

**Carlos Rubinstein, TCEQ Chairman**

What 2011 has shown us and will show us going forward is water conservation is not something that is only talked about during drought periods. Water conservation is something we need to talk about each and every day.

**Drought Hotline: 800-447-2827**

**[tceq.texas.gov](http://tceq.texas.gov)**