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Richard A. Hyde, P.E., *Executive Director*



## TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

*Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution*

May 16, 2014

Mr. Phil Wilson  
General Manager  
Lower Colorado River Authority  
P.O. Box 220  
Austin, Texas 78767-0220

Dear Mr. Wilson:

As you can appreciate, the current persistent drought has caused us all to re-examine water management paradigms and take a new look at standard practices that worked well in the past. The Lower Colorado River Authority's (LCRA's) amendment to its Water Management Plan submitted in March of 2012 reflects this shift in managing water resources. As the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) worked through this amendment and also received input on the emergency relief requested by LCRA in the last year, it became apparent that even since the time that application was submitted, additional data and changes to the Water Management Plan were warranted.

With this in mind, TCEQ technical staff undertook an intensive effort to update naturalized streamflows for the Colorado basin in order to include more recent severe drought data. This information was then used in modeling, especially in regard to curtailment curves for interruptible agricultural releases. Based on this modeling, TCEQ is proposing a very comprehensive drought management regime which includes more stringent curtailment curves with a higher limit on when interruptible water releases would be completely curtailed, depending on the severity of drought conditions.

Please find attached our draft report on this effort with our proposed revisions for the Water Management Plan. I want to note that this is a significantly modified management approach for the plan but one we think is necessary based on our current experience in this historic drought. Because differing conditions are so critical to water management, we've proposed distinct curtailment curves for three different situations: 1) extraordinary drought, 2) less severe drought, and 3) normal conditions. As a draft report that we are seeking input on, the attached document currently contains a range of possible combined storage levels during normal conditions which would trigger different levels of curtailment. At this time, I anticipate that the final report will specify a fixed number to replace the range during normal conditions.

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We look forward to working with LCRA on this important endeavor and would welcome the chance to sit down with your technical staff to discuss the draft report in more detail. In the meantime, if you have questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at 512/239-3900.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.A. Hyde". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard A. Hyde, P.E.  
Executive Director

Enclosure