

Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., *Chairman*
Toby Baker, *Commissioner*
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TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

March 11, 2014

Re: Alert for Permitted State Surface Water Diversions

Dear Water Right Holder:

As you are aware -- and despite recent rains -- Texas continues to experience persistent drought conditions. The current drought has resulted in low or reduced stream flows in many areas of the state, and these conditions could impact senior and superior water right holders. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) continues to closely monitor the evolving situation.

Texas water law specifies that in times of shortage, permitted water rights will be administered based on the priority date of each water right; that is, the earliest in time is senior. Additionally, certain domestic and livestock use rights are superior in priority to permitted rights. The TCEQ is responsible for protecting senior and superior water rights, as well as for ensuring water right holders divert state water only in accordance with their permits.

This letter is to inform you that if a priority call is made, the TCEQ may have to suspend or adjust water rights on a priority basis in some areas of the state. Since it is not possible to predict how long these low flow conditions will continue, you may wish to investigate alternative sources of water for your immediate needs. We also strongly encourage public water systems to implement their drought contingency plans.

The Nueces, San Antonio, Guadalupe, Lavaca, Concho and Rio Grande basins are administered by the TCEQ Watermaster Program. The watermasters for these respective basins will continue to monitor and enforce water rights in those areas.

General information about the drought may be found on the TCEQ's website at: <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/drought>. This site will be updated as the drought continues.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact the Water Rights Permitting Team at (512) 239-4691.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Bergeron Perdue".

Stephanie Bergeron Perdue
Deputy Executive Director