

Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., *Chairman*
Buddy Garcia, *Commissioner*
Carlos Rubinstein, *Commissioner*
Mark R. Vickery, P.G., *Executive Director*



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

June 27, 2011

Re: Suspensions of Permitted State Surface Water Diversions in the Brazos River Basin

Dear County Extension Agent:

On May 18, 2011, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) notified water right holders in the middle and lower Brazos River Basin that non-municipal diversions of state surface water with a priority date of 1980 or later had been suspended due to a senior priority call. In accordance with the Texas Water Code (TWC), §5.013(a)(1), the TCEQ is responsible for enforcing water rights, which requires protecting senior surface water rights, and must take action in response to the senior priority call.

With no immediate relief forecasted, the TCEQ has suspended additional diversions in the mid- and lower- Brazos Basin. Suspended water rights now include water right permits with a priority date of 1960 and later (excluding those for municipal uses and power generation), term water right permits, and temporary water right permits. Domestic and livestock diversions are not subject to this suspension. Copies of this correspondence are enclosed for your reference.

Multiple program areas at the TCEQ are actively engaged in the oversight of available water supplies statewide. We are monitoring drinking water supplies, both groundwater and surface water. We are working with municipalities that face potential shortfalls of available drinking water. There is a common understanding in all of our programmatic efforts that our decisions have profound impacts on the people of Texas. We are weighing our decisions judiciously, paying particular attention to those potential impacts.

With no immediate relief forecasted, the TCEQ is soliciting your help in disseminating appropriate information to affected parties in the Brazos River basin communities. If this drought cycle worsens, it will be very important that all residents living and working in the Brazos River Basin are well informed. The TCEQ has established a drought web page to provide additional information and address questions and concerns. The drought web page is located at: <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/agency/drought.html>. We have also activated the TCEQ Drought Hotline at 1-800-447-2827.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact L'Oreal Stepney, P.E., Deputy Director, Office of Water at 512-239-1321.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zak Covar".

Zak Covar
Deputy Executive Director

Enclosures