

Response to Public Comment
TMDL for Dissolved Oxygen in Lake Austin
November 28, 2000

Tracking Number	Date Received	Affiliation of Commentator	Summary of Request or Comment	Summary of TNRCC Action or Explanation
001	Oct 23, 2000 (Verbal)	Clean Water Action	Improve the TMDL communication strategy by adopting a better way to reach out to stakeholders and general public. Improve the notification process to solicit public comments on draft TMDLs.	A notice of the public comment period and the public meeting was published in two major newspapers in Austin (Austin-American Statesman and Austin Chronicle) and in the Texas Register. Notice was also posted on the TNRCC internet web site. Limited resources are a factor in publicizing TMDLs; however, TNRCC is looking into innovative ways to reach a larger audience and improve its public comment notification processes. No changes have been made to the TMDL based on this comment.
001 (Cont)			Characterization of water body use: Fishing should be assigned as a designated use since the Lake is used for Bass fishery.	TMDLs do not set or change water quality standards. Designated uses are assigned in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards (TSWQS). Any change to a designated use will be addressed during a triennial review of the TSWQS. One of the designated uses already assigned to Lake Austin is a High Aquatic Life Use, which indicates that the lake is fishable. No changes have been made to the TMDL based on this comment.
001 (Cont)			The commentator was concerned that vegetation is becoming a problem on Lake Austin, and in order to control the vegetation, use of herbicides is being discussed. With the use of herbicides, the vegetation will die off causing low DO problems.	Current data for Lake Austin indicate that the source of the low DO problem is directly related to the release of water from the dam as the zone of impairment is localized around the dam. No changes have been made to the TMDL based on this comment.

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002	Oct 27, 2000 (letter)	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD)	Requested better coordination on this TMDL between the two agencies.	The commission appreciates TPWD's support of this TMDL, and TPWD's willingness to assist in the development of the TMDL. Although the first part of the TMDL process is now complete, the commission will invite TPWD to participate in the development of the implementation plan for the TMDL in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement with the TPWD regarding TMDLs. No changes have been made to the TMDL based on this comment.
002 (cont)			Low DO as well as high sulfide contribute to fish kills below Mansfield Dam	The commission appreciates TPWD's concern about sulfide, however this TMDL addresses DO only. Sulfide has not been identified as an impairment through the 303 (d) listing process and therefore does not require a TMDL. No changes have been made to the TMDL based on this comment
002 (cont)			Pulsed nature of discharges from Mansfield Dam of 5000 cfs or more during hydroelectric generation contribute to poor water quality conditions with low DO and high sulfides	No scientific evidence currently exists to directly link the water quality impairment in Lake Austin to the hydrodynamics of the pulse release of water from the hydroelectric dam. As part of the implementation plan, an aeration system will be used to address the DO depletion in Lake Austin by introducing oxygen to the releases from the hypolimnion of stratified Lake Travis. No changes have been made to the TMDL based on this comment.

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002 (cont)			Recommended following implementation management alternatives: Monitor effectiveness of aeration and water quality by measuring DO, sulfides and fish kills downstream of Mansfield Dam; notify TPWD of any fish kills immediately; modify Mansfield Dam releases to minimize pulsing	The TMDL development process involves the preparation of two documents (1) a TMDL which determines the maximum allowable loading and allocates the load to pollutant sources, and (2) an implementation plan which is a detailed description and schedule of regulatory and voluntary management measures necessary to achieve the pollutant reductions identified in the TMDL. This comment deals with aspects of implementation and will be addressed in the implementation plan for Lake Austin. Preparation of implementation plans is critical to ensure water quality standards are restored and maintained. Preparation of the implementation plan for Lake Austin will be initiated immediately upon Commission approval of the TMDL. No changes have been made to the TMDL based on this comment.
003	Oct 30, 2000 (letter)	Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA)	Endpoint goal of 5.0 mg/L DO may not be attainable during the summer and fall when Lake Travis is stratified and calls for a special regulatory consideration. Points out that aeration is the only way to offset anoxia in the hypolimnion and asks for consideration of the technology's limitations, cost, uncertainty and current LCRA efforts to solve the problem.	TNRCC acknowledges the current LCRA efforts and the technological uncertainties. Anoxia improvements with the proper implementation of the aerator will be addressed in the implementation plan. No changes have been made to the TMDL based on this comment.

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003 (cont)			<p>Suggests considering reservoir discharge as a point source discharge and hence allow the concept of mixing zones to give discharged water an opportunity to blend with the water already present before it is evaluated for compliance with standards. Speculates establishing new realistic standards for the tail waters of deep draining reservoirs during the periods of stratification based on mixing zones concept in standards.</p>	<p>TMDLs are not a vehicle to set or change water quality standards. Any change in standards or change in data assessment methodology is a separate process apart from the allocation of pollutant load in a TMDL. However, the implementation plan may include the criterion to be used to determine when implementation procedures can not reasonably be expected to correct the problem and the TMDL may be revisited in the future. No changes have been made to the TMDL based on this comment.</p>