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Brazos River Authority recommends voluntary water conservation efforts for Lake Aquilla

As the drought throughout Texas continues with little relief in sight, the Brazos River Authority (BRA) is recommending voluntary drought measures for Lake Aquilla. The lake is the surface water supply for several Hill County water providers that include the City of Hillsboro, Files Valley Water Supply Corporation, Brandon-Irene Water Supply Corporation, Hill County Water Supply Corporation, and Chatt Water Supply Corporation.

The BRA has notified the Aquilla Water Supply District that Stage 2 conservation efforts are in order to slow the effects of the continued drought on the water supply for the area.

The reservoir reached Stage 1 drought levels in January. Stage 1 does not require water supply cutbacks; however, each water provider is asked to be aware of water usage in their areas. At Stage 2, suppliers are asked to voluntarily reduce usage by three percent.

The Brazos River Authority has developed a Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) as required by state law. This plan includes strategies for temporary supply and demand management in response to water shortages that may occur during a drought.

The DCP has three conditions, or stages, ranging from 1-3 in level of severity. Each stage is tied to a corresponding reservoir level, called a "trigger" level.

When a reservoir drops below its Stage 1 trigger level, the BRA implements Stage 1 *Drought Watch Conditions* where customers and the public are made aware of potential drought problems. During Stage I, there is no goal for reduction of water use.

At the Stage 2 trigger levels, *Drought Warning Conditions* are initiated and a three percent reduction in water use is recommended. Should dry conditions continue to the Stage 3 trigger level, *Drought Emergency Conditions* are issued with a total reduction of seven percent in water use recommended. Some actions in Stage 3 involve mandatory

conservation requirements for both the Authority and its customers and require notification of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

The Brazos River Authority continually monitors weather forecasts, streamflows and lake levels throughout the Brazos River basin. While not all reservoirs have reached trigger levels as laid out in the DCP, the Authority asks that everyone keep in mind the harsh conditions currently hampering a large majority of the state and do their best monitor and be conservative in their water use.

There are many simple ways to conserve water at home. Most homes use a large amount of water in each of four areas, the bathrooms, the kitchen, the laundry room and outdoor use. If everyone took a few small steps it could make a big impact on how much water will be available during a drought like this.

Tips for the bathroom:

Replace showerheads with a more efficient model. This can save up to six gallons of water per minute.

- Place a plastic bag or bottle filled with water in your toilet tank to reduce the amount of water per fill.
- If you have a leak, fix it! Replace worn washers and valves on sinks and pipes. A leaking faucet can waste more than 3,820 gallons of water a year.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth or shaving. (Fill the sink with hot water instead of running it continuously.)

Tips for the kitchen:

- Never run the dishwasher without a full load.
- Don't leave the water running while doing dishes; fill the sink with soapy water.
- Install faucet aerators, they cut the water use in half from the sink.
- It also saves water to steam your vegetables instead of boiling them in a full pot of water.

Tips for the laundry room:

- Wash only full loads and check to see if you have a high efficiency washer. Some of these washers use up to 40% less water and energy than a conventional washer.
- If possible use a short wash cycle.

Tips for outdoor use:

- Do not over-water your lawn. Set sprinklers for times when it is the coolest to avoid evaporation.
- Cover pools and spas to help against evaporation in the summer.
- Choose your plants wisely! You live in Texas; don't expect your palm tree to do well in the 105 degree heat with no rain. Buy plants that are native and can take the heat waves.
- Don't cut your lawn too short. Longer grass absorbs water better than short grass.
- Use lots of mulch in your flower beds and around trees to help hold in moisture.

- If you wash your car at home, use a bucket of soapy water and a nozzle on the hose that you can turn on and off.

A copy of the Brazos River Authority's Drought Contingency Plan can be found at the following web address <http://www.brazos.org/waterFuture.asp> or by contacting the Authority at (254) 761-3111,

About the Brazos River Authority

The Brazos River Authority, with headquarters in Waco, is the oldest river authority in Texas. Created by the Texas Legislature in 1929, the Authority's 42,000 square-mile territory includes all or part of 70 counties; extending from the Texas-New Mexico border west of Lubbock to the Gulf of Mexico near Freeport.

The Authority built, owns, and operates three reservoirs (Lakes Possum Kingdom, Granbury, and Limestone). In addition to these water supply reservoirs, the Authority contracts with the Corps of Engineers for the water supply storage space at eight Federal multi-purpose flood control and water conservation reservoirs (Lakes Whitney, Belton, Proctor, Somerville, Stillhouse Hollow, Granger, Georgetown and Aquilla).

The Brazos River Authority owns and operates a regional wastewater system for the cities of Temple-Belton. The Authority also operates wastewater treatment plants for Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater System in Round Rock, and the cities of Hutto, Georgetown, Dime Box, Clute-Richwood and Sugar Land.

The Authority owns and operates water treatment systems at Lake Granbury (which supplies potable water to wholesale customers in Hood and Johnson Counties), the City of Taylor and the City of Dime Box. A potable water treatment plant located in Leander is owned jointly by the Lower Colorado River Authority and the Brazos River Authority. The Authority also engages in water quality monitoring activities throughout the Brazos River Basin.

For further information on the Brazos River Authority, please contact Judi Pierce, Public Information Officer at 254-761-3103.