



For Immediate Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Judi Pierce
Public Information Officer
(254) 761-3103**

BRAZOS RIVER AUTHORITY WORKING WITH ABILENE ON WATER OPTIONS

September 12, 2014 -- With the upper Brazos River basin well into its fourth year of unprecedented drought conditions, the City of Abilene may soon contract with the Brazos River Authority (BRA) for additional water supply. Abilene has joined many other municipal water users in exploring new options to ensure a continuous supply of water to their citizens.

Yesterday the Abilene city council discussed a plan to access BRA water to help them offset the effects of lingering drought on their local water supply sources. Two of Abilene's primary sources of water, Hubbard Creek Reservoir and OH Ivie Reservoir, are currently less than 20 percent full, with its third supply, Lake Fort Phantom Hill, approximately 35 percent full. Abilene approached the BRA several months ago about accessing more water as a way of proactively exploring options to address their current and future water supply situation.

Abilene plans to contract with the BRA for a little over 4,000 acre-feet of long-term water supply from the Brazos. This water will come out of a contingency reserve from BRA's existing water rights, which is set aside by BRA for emergency conditions, such as those that could occur in the Abilene area should the drought continue or worsen.

The city will access water through BRA's West Central Brazos Water Distribution System, which is an 80-mile pipeline that runs from Possum Kingdom Lake westward towards the Breckenridge area. Accessing the water will require modifications to the current pipeline, which BRA and the City of Abilene are currently researching. The effect of pumping 4,000 acre-feet of water per year from Possum Kingdom Lake to the City of Abilene would be less than six inches per year on the lake level at Possum Kingdom.

This situation helps bring in to focus the very real effects of the drought. Some areas of the upper Brazos basin are facing the possibility of not having enough water to meet their needs in both the short and long-term. In order to avoid potential instances where water users are literally left high and dry, the need exists to not only develop new water supply sources, but also to use our current supplies as effectively as possible.

“The efforts between the BRA and the City of Abilene is a good example of two entities working together to ensure citizens in the basin have continuous access to water supply to meet their needs,” said Phil Ford, BRA general manager/chief executive officer

- 30 -

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 BRA built, owns, and operates three reservoirs (Lakes Possum Kingdom, Granbury, and Limestone). In addition to these water supply reservoirs, the BRA 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 operates a regional wastewater system for the cities of Temple-Belton and the Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater System for the City of Round Rock. The Authority also operates wastewater treatment plants for the cities of Dime Box, Clute-Richwood, Sugar Land, and Hutto.

The BRA owns and operates the East Williamson County Regional Water System for the City of Taylor and operates potable water treatment plant for the cities of Dime Box and Leander.

The BRA engages in water quality monitoring activities throughout the Brazos River basin. As a member of the Texas Clean River Program, the BRA samples and tests water from more than 100 locations throughout the basin on either a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. For further information on the Brazos River Authority, please contact Judi Pierce, Public Information Officer at 254-761-3103.