



Renewing Texas Infrastructure

2012 Texas Infrastructure Report Card

Texas Section – American Society of Civil Engineers



Drinking Water Fact Sheet

Key Infrastructure Facts: Existing Condition and Performance

- By 2060, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) estimates almost 1,100 cities and other water user groups will need additional water supplies. For some users, this can be achieved by a reduction in demand through conservation and/or drought management efforts, or by developing additional sources of water beyond those currently available.
- If a drought-of-record occurs in Texas in 2060, about 41% of municipal demand could not be satisfied by current water sources. This figure is lower than that projected in previous plans due to implementation of several water management strategies/projects in the past 5 years.
- Groundwater is a major source of water for Texas. However, projected depletions of groundwater and water quality problems due to naturally occurring constituents (e.g. arsenic, chlorides, radionuclides, etc.), will leave groundwater supplies will be insufficient to meet many irrigation needs and the needs of some cities.
- The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is the primary Texas agency authorized to enforce the rules associated with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996. The TCEQ regulates an estimated 7,055 public water systems, which serve 93 percent of the state's population.
- About 95 percent of the state's public water systems meet state and federal drinking water standards.

Anticipated Growth and Other Future Needs

- The population of Texas is expected to increase in excess of 80% in the next 50 years, from about 25.5 million to more than 46 million.
- Ensuring the long-term supply of safe water at affordable rates is the TCEQ's responsibility. This challenge grows as the population multiplies, posing greater demands on water systems for staying in compliance with federal water quality laws.
- In Texas, the number of new, small water systems is steadily increasing, raising concerns about their ability to sustain the financial, managerial, and technical capabilities necessary to provide continuous, adequate, and safe service.
- Both TWDB and TCEQ encourage the regionalization of water and wastewater systems.

Adequacy of Current Funding and Need for Expanded Funding

- The TWDB estimates that about \$212 billion will be needed in 2060 for water supplies, treatment and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment and some flood control projects.
- The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), established by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, is intended to protect public health by offering low-interest loans for designing, building, and improving public drinking water facilities. The TWDB and TCEQ review proposed

water projects, and the TWDB processes and approves loan applications. Since the inception of the DWSRF Program, TWDB has issued 196 funding commitments for a total of \$1.10 billion.

- Without external funding assistance, many local governments cannot develop the necessary internal expertise to provide the quality of service mandated under current health and safety requirements. Others, which may have the expertise, are unable to finance such service without external assistance which is estimated at \$27 billion in the 2012 State Water Plan
- Every regional plan emphasizes the need for an expanded State role in financing infrastructure and water supply improvements.
- The need is growing for State assistance programs to provide cost-effective regional water systems; support disadvantaged communities; and fund nontraditional water management strategies and agricultural and municipal water conservation.
- The Texas legislature must continue to appropriate funds for the dedicated programs created in the past 10 years. These funds enhance the State's ability to assist local governments in implementing water infrastructure projects and meeting the needs of the State's growing population.
- The State and Federal Governments must commit adequate funding to the following financial assistance programs:
 - Rural Water Assistance Fund Program
 - Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program
 - Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program
 - State Participation in Regional Water and Wastewater Facilities
 - Water Infrastructure Fund Program
 - Texas Water Development Fund
 - Economically Distressed Areas Program
- Increased funding is needed for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Programs offered by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- The Legislature should target financial assistance for mitigating costs of compliance to new drinking water treatment standards.
- Other than low-interest loan programs, the State does not directly contribute to funding local water infrastructure or maintenance except in some economically disadvantaged areas.

Sources

- *Water for Texas 2012*, Texas Water Development Board
- Texas Water Development Board website (www.twdb.state.tx.us)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development website (www.hud.gov)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website (www.epa.gov)
- *Input from staff at TWDB and TCEQ, March 2012*