

**MINUTES**  
**Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group**  
**Population and Demand Committee Meeting**  
**February 6, 2023**

INTERA Incorporated Offices  
9600 Great Hills Plaza, Suite 300W  
Austin, TX 78759  
9:00 A.M.

**Meeting Minutes:**

1. Call to Order, Introductions and Roll Call – Lauri Gillam, Committee Chair  
Meeting was called to order at approximately 9:00 A.M.

**Attendance:**

**Committee Members:**

Lauri Gillam, Small Municipalities, Committee Chair  
Christina Castleberry, Water Utilities  
Barbara Johnson, Industry  
Monica Masters, River Authorities  
Teresa Lutes, Municipalities  
Jason Homan, Alternate for Environmental  
Sue Thorton, Alternate for Recreation  
Earl Foster, Alternate for Small Municipalities

**Other Planning Group Members**

Daniel Berglund, Small Business

**Other attendees:**

Cindy Smiley, Smiley Law Firm  
Sara Eatman, Austin Water  
Stacy Pandey, LCRA  
Robert Adams, Plummer, Consulting Team  
Justin Durant, FNI, Consulting Team  
Neil Deeds, INTERA, Consulting Team

2. Public Comments

Cindy Smiley of Smiley Law Firm:

Ms. Smiley discussed the need for the committee to be conservative in their estimates of demands, suggesting a significant downside of not making the demand estimates high enough. She asked the committee to lean towards the worst case when considering future conditions. She thanked the committee for their work and noted the importance of the process.

### 3. Review Revised Irrigation Projections

Lauri Gillam discussed the history of the irrigation demand projections, noting that two planning cycles ago the region used the TWDB estimates, but in the most recent planning cycle, the irrigation demand estimates were revised based on work by this committee. The estimates were made based on input from LCRA and irrigators, and the revisions were accepted by the TWDB.

She noted that the same approach, as much as possible, was being employed in the current planning cycle, but that the estimates were not yet ready for discussion at the committee level, with more time being needed to ensure that the approach was consistent with previous efforts.

This agenda item was tabled.

### 4. Review Draft Mining Projections

#### a. Consider Burnet County revision request

Neil Deeds of the consulting team presented a proposed revision to the mining demands in Burnet County. He had met with Mitchell Sodek, planning group member and general manager of the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District (CTGCD), which covers Burnet County. Through his role at the CTGCD, Mr. Sodek had mining water use estimates, based on reporting by the mines, that were higher than those estimated by the TWDB.

Neil presented the assumptions and estimates provided by Mr. Sodek. The committee discussed the revised estimates and generally agreed that the revisions would be proposed to the planning group.

Additional discussion of the mining demands included a request by Sue Thorton that the consulting team see whether revised estimates could be made for Llano County, even in the absence of data from a GCD. She is concerned Llano County TWDB estimates are similarly low (as in Burnet County). Some members were skeptical that revisions would be accepted by the TWDB without additional data support.

The committee reiterated their desire for the consulting team to provide an explanation for the large decrease in mining demand estimates from the most recent planning cycle to the current TWDB estimates.

**Action Items:** Consulting team to look into additional data sources for Llano County, and provide explanation for decrease in TWDB mining use estimates in the region.

### 5. Review Livestock, Manufacturing, Steam electric projections; consider proposed revisions

Robert Adams of the consulting team presented the demand projections for livestock, manufacturing, and steam-electric.

Livestock was presented first. Livestock demands were developed using the same methodology as last cycle although livestock use coefficients have changed significantly. They applied the new water/head to average animal counts which are an average of 2015-2019. Robert noted that the counts drop during a drought, so that range of numbers will include the lower years. Jason Homan asked if they had used historical data, Robert explained that the TWDB uses

historical data from the last 5 years as their methodology and the numbers are updated with each planning cycle.

Barbara Johnson asked if there's any value to calculating the water/head of cattle based on their water use in a drought year, because we would expect it to be higher. Robert said that he has looked into this for another region, looked into water use for animals and how it relates to temperatures. His research indicated that TWDB approach is appropriate for drought years.

Sue Thornton asked whether exotics were considered, since there are large tracts of land for exotics in the northern part of the region. The general consensus was that exotics were not explicitly considered as livestock. Lauri suggested that Region K include a recommendation in Chapter 8 about tracking data for exotics.

After reviewing the livestock demands on a county-by-county basis, Monica Masters moved, and Barbara seconded a motion to accept the draft livestock demand numbers. Motion passed by voice vote.

**Action:** Livestock demand numbers accepted by committee for proposal to planning group.

Manufacturing was presented next, again by Robert. He noted that the methodology was based on highest water use from 2015-2019, plus unaccounted for demands. Growth was estimated from the County Business Patterns historical data.

Robert noted some manufacturers that were not included in the draft numbers, and suggested corrections. This included confirming that US Fish & Wildlife is the same or separate user from the Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery. Robert was to check with LCRA with respect to this question.

Monica discussed "future industrial users" in the Highland Lakes area and the lower basin. General discussion about confirming whether these will be allowed or if TWDB will require a specific named/contracted entity to include in the demand projections. About 30K AFY was currently set for "future industrial users" in Travis, but that is too high. City of Austin would need to supply, and Monica said there were no "tire kickers" she knew of in Travis. Teresa Lutes indicated she would bring some kind of projection forward for this item.

**Action Items:** Robert to check with LCRA on Inks Dam Fish Hatchery. City of Austin (Teresa) would bring forward more specifics about potential future demands.

Steam electric manufacturing was the final portion of this item, presented by Robert. Steam Electric baseline is based on the highest year demand (per county) from 2015-2019, refers to facilities that are closed/closing. Water use is limited to consumptive use. Draft projections were held constant from 2030-2080. Robert presented some proposed changes for the Decker and Fayette power plants.

Committee asked that a suggestion be brought forward to TWDB that natural gas power plants be assessed for water use in future planning cycles. This was associated with the discussion of Mueller Energy Center.

**Action Items:** Robert to confirm that Decker Power Station demands should decrease to zero. Robert to discuss with City of Austin whether to remove demand for LCRA Fayette and Austin Fayette from the projections.

6. Review schedule

- a. Schedule future meetings of Population and Demand Committee, as needed.
- b. Consider report(s) to and request(s) of the full Region K Regional Water Planning Group

Livestock demand numbers accepted by committee for reporting to the planning group.

Neil suggested the next meeting should occur within a month or so, and would be sending out a "doodle poll" to try get input on scheduling the meeting.

7. New/other business

None, other than action items from previous discussions.

8. Receive public comments

No public comments were offered for this item.

9. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:58 A.M.