

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Friday, July 18, 2014

Contact: Ken Kramer, Sierra Club, 512-626-4204 (cell)  
Vanessa Martin, The Nature Conservancy, 512-623-7249  
Myron Hess, National Wildlife Federation, 512-610-7754

## **Conservation Groups Encourage Input on State Water Funding Rules**

### ***Public Comment Period Underway, Public Hearings Begin July 24 in San Antonio***

Austin, Texas —The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) has [proposed agency rules](#) to govern the use of a new state water project fund approved by voters last November with the passage of Proposition 6. State conservation groups are encouraging Texans to take the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed rules. [Hearings](#) on the rules begin next Thursday, July 24 in San Antonio, with additional public hearings set for August 13 in San Angelo and August 21 in Fort Worth. In addition, [TWDB is taking comments via email and postal mail or through a portal on the agency's website](#).

“The Water Development Board has been very open to public input in drafting the proposed rules to administer the new State Water Implementation Fund for Texas ([SWIFT](#))” said **Ken Kramer, Water Resources Chair for the Sierra Club’s Lone Star Chapter**. “Texans have a chance in the next few weeks to weigh in on these rules to assure that water conservation is the top priority in meeting our state’s water needs.” The rules will implement House Bill 4 (HB 4), the legislation passed by the Texas Legislature in 2013 to put the water fund created by Prop 6 into operation.

“After three long years of drought, Texans inherently understand that as a state, we cannot continue to treat water as an infinite resource,” said **Laura Huffman, Texas state director of The Nature Conservancy**. “With these draft rules, the Texas Water Development Board has delivered on the State Legislature’s promise to ensure that conservation plays a front and center role in meeting our future water supply needs. These hearings provide an important opportunity for the public to express their support for this strategy, which is undoubtedly the cheapest and most effective way to stretch water supplies for our growing state.”

“This is a great opportunity to speak up in favor of directing the new state funding to water projects, such as replacing leaking water pipelines, that will ensure that our limited water resources are used efficiently,” added **Myron Hess, Manager of Texas Water Programs for the National Wildlife Federation**. “Projects to curb water loss, which wastes millions of gallons of existing water supplies in our state each day, can help us maintain the healthy rivers and coastal bays which are the birthright of all Texans.”

In a demonstration of the importance of the proposed HB 4 rules, the [Chairman of the Water Development Board Carlos Rubinstein as well as Board Directors Bech Bruun and Kathleen Jackson](#), will be personally listening to public comments on the rules at each of the three public hearings, which will be conducted as work sessions of the Board. (Usually only agency staff members conduct hearings on proposed rules.)

The public comment deadline on the HB 4 rules is September 1. Following that deadline TWDB staff will review the comments and make any necessary revisions to the proposed rules in order to take the final rules before the three-member Board for consideration and possible adoption in December.

###