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Statement of Ken Kramer on Governor Abbott's Line Item Veto on Water Conservation Education Funding

AUSTIN, Texas – In response to Governor Greg Abbott's line item veto of \$1 million for water conservation education grants in FY 2016, **Ken Kramer, Water Resources Chair, Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club**, issued the following statement:

"The recent wet weather in Texas must have clouded Governor Abbott's view of the need to expand water conservation efforts statewide. While Texas has a temporary reprieve from our state's regularly recurring droughts we should be enhancing the understanding by our fellow Texans that using water efficiently is necessary in both wet and dry times if we are to have adequate water supplies to meet the needs of a growing population and long term economic prosperity.

Instead, the Governor has vetoed a \$1 million appropriation for water conservation education grants in the 2016-2017 state budget on the inaccurate grounds that such funding is "duplicative of existing water conservation initiatives." It is not. Indeed while the State Legislature created a statewide water education program in 2007, it has yet to fund that program, despite recommendations from Legislative Budget Board staff and others to do so.

The competitive water conservation education grants – first authorized in 2013 – were a pittance toward carrying out the goals of water education. It's curious that, at a time of budget surplus and documented research on the continuing need for water education in Texas, the Governor saw fit to exercise his only line item veto of appropriations for natural resources agencies to undercut such water education."

Background:

For the text of the water conservation education grant appropriation in HB 1 and the text of the Governor's line item veto of that appropriation, see page 7 of the "HB 1 Signature and Item Disapproval Proclamation" issued by the Governor's office and filed with the Secretary of State on June 20, 2015:

<http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/scanned/vetoes/84/hb1.pdf#navpanes=0>.

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