

IS IT DRY ENOUGH FOR YOU?

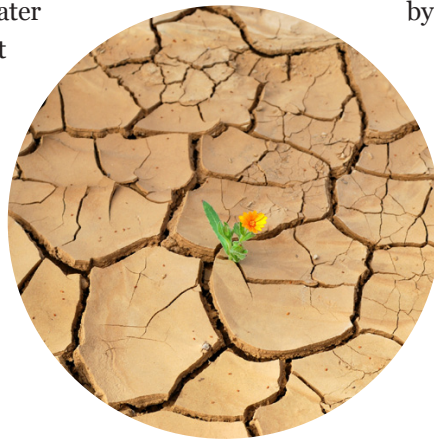
Epic Drought: A Wake-Up Call for Conservation Planning

For more than two years now, Clean Water Action has been sounding the alarm about the looming water crisis. Continued population growth in Texas, a warming climate and frequent drought all prove the urgency of the need. Communities must ramp up water conservation programs now.

Austin and other Central Texas cities need to shift their spending on expensive new water treatment and distribution infrastructure to smarter investments in using available water supplies more efficiently. Clean Water Action has made this case repeatedly in meetings with decision makers across the region.

Now, the crisis Clean Water Action warned about is here. Texas is in the grip of a drought that is breaking all records for severity. Meteorologists project that, at a minimum, the drought will continue through spring 2012, all but guaranteeing another scorching summer. The state climatologist warns that the drought may last another ten years or more.

On top of all this, the Lower Colorado River Authority is making plans to cut back water supplies from the Colorado



For people who want to protect the quality of life in Texas communities and keep enough water in Texas rivers and aquifers to sustain healthy natural habitats and wildlife, water conservation is a bargain.

by up to 20% for all of its firm customers, once water level in lakes Buchanan and Travis drop below historic lows. Those conditions could arrive by April 2012. Austin, Round Rock, Cedar Park, Leander and many other cities in the region will have to get by with far less water from the Colorado. The LCRA has already made plans to eliminate water supply to downstream rice farmers for 2012.

The current drought is also lowering groundwater levels. The Barton Spring Edwards Aquifer District enacted "Stage 3" drought restrictions in September, banning all outdoor uses of water.

Despite this impending crisis, neither the state nor most Texas communities have enacted the cost effective measures that are necessary. At a minimum, cities should lower their average daily consumption rates to 140 gallons per person per day, as recommended by the Texas Water Development Board. San Antonio and San Marcos have already done this without compromising their residents' quality of life.

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from the Texas Program Director

David Foster

You would think that in a state like Texas, where water is so important, politicians would be falling all over themselves trying to protect it.

Blessed with abundant, reliable sunshine and steady breezes across huge regions of the state, Texas would surely be at the forefront of a job-creating clean energy revolution. State lawmakers must be leading the charge with new subsidies and tax incentives to hasten the transition from costly energy technologies such as coal, natural gas and nuclear. You would think those relics of the old energy economy, that consume and pollute scarce water resources and fuel the global warming that will make Texas' heat and drought problems even worse would soon be a thing of the past — and that Texas' elected officials in Austin and Washington, DC would be doing everything in their power to make it happen.

However, anyone paying close attention to what's really going on in Austin or in Washington, DC knows that those assumptions would be wrong on all counts. Too many Texas lawmakers, at both the state and the federal levels, seem to be focused instead on carrying out the wishes of the nation's largest polluters, including Big Coal, the Oil Industry and others with a vested interest in keeping our economy mired in those old, polluting technologies of the past.

Take a look at how Texas' Congressional delegation has been voting on the reckless Dirty Water agenda that is moving through Congress (*see page 5*). A similar look at the Texas legislature's behavior over the past year reveals the alarming extent to which lobbyists for polluting industries seem to be calling the shots.

Yes, things are looking pretty grim when it comes to the challenges Clean Water Action faces protecting our water and our health. Sometimes the deck really seems stacked against us in the fight to build a clean energy future that protects our water.

But here's the good news: thanks to members like you, we're winning here in Texas and across the country. So far, we've been able to stop the worst of the attacks on our water in Washington. Even with the polluters' considerable influence in Austin, Texas communities are emerging as national leaders in the clean energy revolution.

Yes, for the time being, ours remains something of an uphill battle, but momentum is slowly shifting in our favor. That's because in the long run, Clean Water Action's agenda of fishable, swimmable, drinkable water and a clean energy future for all Americans is one that makes environmental, economic and political sense to an overwhelming majority of people. When you join with Clean Water Action by providing financial support for our programs and by taking action to defend and advance our shared clean water values you are doing what really counts: making democracy work.

Thank you for all that you do.

David Foster

State Program Director, Texas Clean Water Action

DRY ENOUGH FOR YOU? *Continued from page 1*

Clean Water Action is urging its members to contact their mayor, council members and other elected officials to demand the following water conservation steps:

- Develop and implement plans to lower per capita daily water consumption to 140-gallons, if not lower.
- Build out water reclamation systems so partially-treated wastewater can be used for irrigation and air conditioning cooling towers.
- Fix leaky pipes that cause cities to lose 12% or more of the water they treat and distribute.
- Establish rebate programs or give-aways for low-flow toilets and other water-efficient plumbing fixtures.
- Require water-efficiency plumbing fixture retrofits when houses are sold, with the costs to be rolled into the mortgage.
- Implement plans to install modern fixtures in place of outdated plumbing in aging homes and multi-family units.
- Ban water intensive turf grasses such as St Augustine in all new subdivisions, and create financial incentives for homeowners who replace such landscaping with native and drought-resistant alternatives.
- Invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy, since these technologies require far less water than coal, natural gas and nuclear.

Water conservation programs do cost money. But numerous studies have shown that conservation costs far less pumping in water from distant places, desalinating ground water, or building new treatment plants.

Photo courtesy of the BSEACD



From left to right: BSEACD Board Member Jack Goodman; Clean Water Fund's David Foster; National Clean Water Board Member Brigid Shea; and field organizer Tom Fosburr.

Water Conservation Award. Clean Water Fund received a 2011 Environmental Stewardship Award this November from the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District. The award honors Clean Water Fund's water conservation outreach. As part of a Central Texas Water Conservation Project, Clean Water Fund and Clean Water Action contacted more than 31,000 households, distributed more than 55,000 educational fact sheets and flyers, met with dozens of city council members and water utility officials, and made presentations to more than two dozen community groups.

To learn more, or to schedule a presentation for your neighborhood or homeowners association, please call (512) 637-9482.

ANNOUNCING THE CLEAN WATER CARD

Clean Water Action announces a new partnership with Capital One®.

Through this partnership, Clean Water Action and NJEF members and supporters applying for the **Clean Water Action VISA® credit card**, will be able to select between three different credit options to fit individual needs. Purchases made with your Clean Water Action VISA card will help support our Clean Water Action movement.



You can select between three great card art designs, and choose the credit option that you feel best meets your needs while showing your support for Clean Water Action. Great rewards, low introductory interest rate, or build your own credit — you decide.

Members who apply and qualify for the Rewards card will earn 1.25 miles for every \$1 spent on purchases with the card.

This Clean Water Action VISA® card is the only credit card offered to support our cause. Apply today at www.cleanwatercard.org!

PROMISING CLEAN ENERGY INITIATIVES



No state has greater renewable energy potential than Texas. Texas already leads the nation in wind energy production. Additional transmission lines nearing completion will bring even more power from windy West Texas to growing cities in the eastern part of the state. Solar farms are also planned in the sun-drenched west, and this energy, too, will soon be conveyed to population centers along these same power lines.

In spite of this progress, Texas continues to rely on coal, nuclear and natural gas for the bulk of its energy. Mercury pollution from Texas' coal-burning power plants is the nation's worst. Texas also leads in its output of the

same planet-warming greenhouse gas pollution that scientists predict will increase the frequency and severity of Texas' droughts. Japan's recent earthquake-induced nuclear problems illustrate the steep costs and risks of continued reliance on nuclear technologies, and nuclear energy's huge water needs make it even less well suited for dry states like Texas. Natural gas, which is enjoying a renaissance thanks to hydrofracking, produces only half the greenhouse gas pollution of coal, but that amount is still unsustainable and will make drought conditions in Texas even worse over time. Hydrofracking's water impacts are also significant, consuming millions of gallons of the scarce resource and then releasing most of it as polluted wastewater, and threatening permanent contamination of underground water supplies. Neither Texas nor the federal government regulates hydrofracking to protect water and health in any meaningful way.

Clean Water Action is at the forefront of the fight to steer Texas away from polluting forms of energy in favor of wind, solar and energy efficiency. Lobbyists for polluting industries exercise enormous influence in the state legislature, so the best examples of progress so far are more local.

The Sun Rises in San Antonio

Clean Water Action's grassroots campaigning helped the Energia Mia coalition prevent San Antonio from investing heavily in two new proposed nuclear reactors at Matagorda County's South Texas Nuclear Project. Clean Water Action

contacted thousands of households door-to-door and by phone and collected thousands of individual hand-written letters and other communications calling for clean energy alternatives that were delivered to city leaders. The Alamo City not only said 'no' to nuclear, it also pledged to close the polluting coal-fired Dealy Power Plant by 2018. This will be the first closure of a municipally-owned coal plant in Texas.

To replace this energy, the city has:

- become the state's leader in wind energy purchases,
- pledged to reduce energy demands substantially through energy efficiency investments (such as insulating attics), and,
- made plans to produce 400 megawatts of energy from solar by 2020.

The city just completed a 14 megawatt solar installation in southeastern Bexar County that can power 1800 homes, and has contracted with SunEnergy to build an additional 30 MW of solar in three other arrays in the San Antonio vicinity. Most encouraging of all, 250 MW of the 400 MW solar goal will come from panels placed on 50,000 homes and 6,000 businesses. All of this promises to create thousands of jobs and pour millions of dollars into the local economy.

Pedernales Electric Going 'Green'

Progress has been slower at Pedernales Electric Cooperative, the nation's largest consumer-owned electric co-op in the nation. The PEC serves more than 200,000 members in a vast area stretching from Austin's suburbs to Junction and beyond. In the last few years, the PEC has reformed its governance practices and ended decades of scandal that culminated in the conviction of its long-time general manager for money laundering in December 2010. Clean Water Action has played a critical role in turning the PEC around, helping win six of seven seats on the board for reform candidates since 2008 — including two elected in June 2012. This PEC board is now set to implement programs for renewable energy and efficiency that will place the co-op among the nation's leaders in clean energy. These measures will include low-interest loans and rebates for roof-top solar and energy efficiency upgrades similar to those offered by Austin and San Antonio, as well substantial purchases from solar and wind arrays. Clean Water Action will be working 2012 to make sure these programs will stay on track, and will again mobilize members and others in the PEC's May-June 2012 board elections to back up those efforts.

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PROMISING CLEAN ENERGY INITIATIVES *Continued from page 4*

Austin Eclipsed on Solar Energy

For decades, Austin’s far-sighted energy efficiency programs, wind energy purchases and rebates for rooftop solar installations have earned the city national recognition as a clean energy leader. Each of Austin’s City Council members, including the Mayor, has now pledged to end the city’s reliance on the coal-burning Fayette Power Plant. The coal plant is jointly owned by Austin and the Lower Colorado River Authority.

However, unlike San Antonio, Austin has yet to set a firm date or developed a plan for this transition away from coal. Moreover, Austin’s goal of generating 200 megawatts of energy from solar by 2020 is only half of that of San Antonio’s. While San Antonio plans to produce most of its solar energy from roof-top arrays within its city limits, Austin intends to produce a mere 25 megawatts of solar from roof-top installations. The rest will come primarily from new solar farms in West Texas. In clean energy initiatives as in water conservation, Austin has fallen behind its neighbor to the south.

Clean Water Action and the Solar Austin coalition are working to restore Austin’s clean energy leadership. In the coming

weeks, Clean Water Action members will be urging the Austin City Council, which doubles as the Board of Austin Energy, to increase the city’s solar goal from 200 to 500 megawatts by 2020, including 300 megawatts from rooftop solar in Austin. Other clean energy demands to be delivered to Council Members include:

- Remove the 20 kilowatt cap on the amount of solar that can be installed on commercial rooftops,
- Create a program allowing renters to buy into community solar projects, and,
- Pay customers with solar panels a fair rate for the electricity they produce.

These solar initiatives will help wean Austin off of polluting fossil fuels, allow Austin Energy’s customers to share revenues made possibly by solar technology, and create thousands of new jobs in Central Texas.



HOW THEY VOTED: Texas’ Legislative Scorecard

The U.S. House of Representatives is engaged in an all-out assault on the laws and regulations that have kept our water drinkable and our air breathable for decades. In addition to passing a bill that will gut the Clean Water Act, H.R. 2018, the House has also voted to make our air less breathable, with the passage this September of the TRAIN act. Representatives voted in October to reduce protection from emissions from cement plants and industrial boilers. Additional dirty water votes are expected.

Clean Water Action analyzed votes on 12 key bills. Scores for Texas’s Representatives and Senators are shown below. More information and details on individual votes are available on Clean Water Action’s web site: <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/feature/did-your-representative-vote-protect-environment>

TEXAS				% PRO-ENVIRONMENT VOTES				
<i>REPRESENTATIVES</i>								
2	Poe (R)	0%	18	Jackson Lee (D)	100%	29	Green, G. (D)	92%
3	Johnson, S. (R)	0%	20	Gonzalez (D)	92%	30	Johnson, E. (D)	100%
4	Hall, R. (R)	0%	21	Smith, Lamar (R)*	0%	31	Carter (R)	0%
6	Barton (R)	0%	22	Olson (R)	0%	32	Sessions, P. (R)	0%
7	Culberson (R)	0%	24	Marchant (R)	0%	<i>SENATORS:</i>		
9	Green, A. (D)	100%	25	Doggett (D)	100%	John Cornyn (R)	0%	
10	McCaul (R)	8%	26	Burgess (R)*	0%	Kay Bailey Hutchison (R)	0%	
12	Granger (R)	0%	28	Cuellar (D)	50%			

*Asterisk denotes that the representative did not vote on all bills. Percentages are based on total of number of bills voted on.

TAKE ACTION: *Call or write your Congressperson and let them know how you feel about their votes. Urge them to let EPA do its job and tell them to protect us, not polluters! Go to http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2155/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=8217#action*

Turn this:
CLEAN WATER
into this:
CLEAN WATER

When it comes to year-end giving, you already know that Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund are smart choices to receive your financial support. Your gifts can have a huge positive impact, helping to protect water and health, now and for the future.

Here are four tips for how you can make the positive impact from your year-end giving even greater.

YEAR-END GIVING TIPS

- 1. Matching Gifts.** Many employers will match donations made to **Clean Water Fund** dollar for dollar or sometimes even 2:1 or 3:1. That could allow your \$100 donation to have a \$200 or \$300 impact for our water.
- 2. Giving at Work.** You can support Clean Water through your company's payroll deduction program. Federal employees can designate Clean Water Fund to receive their gifts through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #10636). Contact us for help adding Clean Water Fund as a workplace giving option, or establishing a payroll deduction program in your workplace.
- 3. Retirement Resource Opportunity.** 2011 is the last year for special retiree-only giving incentives created by the federal government. Until December 31, 2011, anyone 70^{1/2} or older can donate up to \$100,000 tax free to nonprofits like Clean Water Fund from their Individual Retirement Accounts (traditional or Roth IRAs). Mandatory IRA distributions are otherwise subject to income tax, but not if they're given directly to charities in 2011. Call Clean Water Fund for details, (202) 330-2379.
- 4. Give the Gift of Clean Water.** You can designate your online donation(s) as gifts in honor or memory of a special person or occasion. Visit the "Donate" buttons on the [Clean Water Action](#) or [Clean Water Fund](#) web sites to learn how.

Questions? Contact us by e-mail, development@cleanwater.org or phone (202) 330-2379.



Texas Currents

WINTER UPDATE 2011

Clean Water Action is a national citizens' organization working for clean, safe and affordable water, prevention of health-threatening pollution, creation of environmentally-safe jobs and businesses, and empowerment of people to make democracy work.

Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups, coalitions and campaigns to protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life.

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