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GBRA Advances Mid-Basin Water Supply Project

SEGUIN, Texas—The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) advanced towards implementation of the second phase of the Mid-Basin Water Supply Project (MBWSP) after the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) approved issuance of a new, 75,000 acre-foot per year surface water right on Wednesday, August 12, 2020.

While the first phase of the MBSWSP is already underway, TCEQ's approval of the surface water right will allow GBRA to pursue the next phase of the MBWSP, which is the long-term, multi-phased, conjunctive use water supply project that GBRA began developing in 2004 as a proactive solution to meet projected water needs of the growing population along the I-35 and TX-130 corridors. The MBWSP is designed to employ a combination of surface water, groundwater, off-channel storage, and aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) to efficiently manage a new regional water supply. By using a combination of groundwater and surface water and implementing the conjunctive use option of the Mid-Basin Project, GBRA has selected a cost-effective, diversified source of water supply that will be phased in to meet existing and future customers' needs.

The operational flexibility of the MBWSP allows GBRA to meet customer demands for water by managing, treating, and using ASR wells to store excess river flows, when available, in the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer.

"Conservation alone cannot supply the future needs of the growing communities in our basin," said Kevin Patteson, GBRA general manager and CEO. "The Mid-Basin Water Supply Project demonstrates how GBRA is at the forefront of finding solutions within its district to ensure the availability of reliable and safe drinking water for generations to come."

The first phase of the MBWSP overlaps with GBRA's Carrizo Groundwater Supply Project, and is a collaboration with Alliance Regional Water Authority. This portion of the project is currently under construction. In this initial phase, GBRA and Alliance Water will each produce 15,000 acre-feet per year of groundwater from the Carrizo Aquifer near Waelder, Texas, and will share in the treatment and transmission of the treated water to their customers in 2023. The total combined estimate for the project is approximately \$400 million, and each entity will be financing its share of this cost with low-interest Texas Water Development Board SWIFT loans. The joint infrastructure project provides substantial cost savings on water treatment, transmission line capacity and operations, allowing GBRA's customers to save approximately \$52 million.

Phase II of the MBWSP will utilize the TCEQ-issued surface water right to divert up to 75,000 acre-feet per year of permitted surface water to an off-channel reservoir for treatment and delivery to GBRA customers, with excess treated water injected into a new ASR well field.

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About

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority was established by the Texas Legislature in 1933 as a water conservation and reclamation district. GBRA provides stewardship for the water resources in its 10-county statutory district which begins near the headwaters of the Guadalupe and Blanco rivers, ends at San Antonio Bay, and includes Kendall, Comal, Hays, Caldwell, Guadalupe, Gonzales, DeWitt, Victoria, Calhoun and Refugio counties.