



SUSAN COMBS, COMMISSIONER

TEXAS DEPARTMENT
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September 12, 2002

Mr. J. Kevin Ward
Executive Administrator
Texas Water Development Board
P.O. Box 13231
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Mr. Ward:

I am writing to convey my concerns with the proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir as a water supply strategy contained in the state water plan, "Water for Texas - 2002."

First and foremost, I am concerned about the impact the reservoir would have on the economy of Northeast Texas - driven primarily by agriculture. The loss of agricultural land from both actual reservoir construction and required habitat mitigation would be, at a minimum, 225,000 acres, and could actually be as high as 986,000 acres, depending on the mitigation management option. The Texas Forest Service estimates that the loss of timberland would have a negative economic impact on the region of between \$87 million and \$275 million and include a loss of between 417 and 1,334 local jobs.

I am also concerned about the lack of support for this project by local residents where the reservoir would be located. In fact, I am unaware of any support in Red River, Titus or surrounding Northeast Texas counties that would be most impacted by the reservoir.

I understand that Region D is currently considering removing Marvin Nichols from the regional plan and ultimately from the state water plan. I am pleased to see that the spirit of local water planning, as originally laid forth in Senate Bill 1, is running its course. I look forward to seeing the process continue.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns. As always, do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely

Susan Combs
Commissioner

SC/tgp

cc: Mr. Tony Williams, Chair - Region D

*Making Texas the nation's
leader in agriculture while
providing efficient and
extraordinary service.*