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SOME BRAZOS RIVER AUTHORITY SYSTEM RESERVOIRS REMOVED FROM DROUGHT STATUS

WACO, Texas (February 19, 2024) – Continued rain events in the Brazos River basin have allowed the Brazos River Authority to remove the Stage 1 Drought Watch status from the BRA's System of reservoirs. The removal of drought designation allows most BRA customer cities, industries and agriculture to change or remove restrictions they currently have in place for water supply use.

The System-wide Stage 1 Drought Watch notice was issued on August 17, 2022, requesting that all water supply customers institute a voluntary reduction of five percent (5%) reduction in water use. The reduction was requested to raise awareness of the increasing drought situation.

Rain events in January raised the combined storage of the BRA System reservoirs above the Stage 1 Drought Watch trigger level. As of February 12th, the BRA System has risen to 85 percent full, storing approximately 1.63 million acre-feet. All of the BRA system reservoirs located outside of the Little River system are either full or near full, with several of the Corps of Engineers reservoirs temporarily storing water in their flood control pools.

Though the combined storage for the BRA System of reservoirs has risen above the Stage 1 Drought Watch trigger, several reservoirs remain under more stringent drought declarations. Lakes Belton and the Lake Stillhouse Hollow – Lake Georgetown subsystem remain under a Stage 2 Drought Warning, requiring a 10 percent reduction in use, and Lake Proctor remains under Stage 4 Pro-Rata Curtailment, which mandates a 30 percent reduction in use.

The state requires the BRA to plan and implement a Drought Contingency Plan. This plan outlines steps to extend the supply and availability of water during times of drought. The Drought Contingency Plan includes four stages. Each stage is marked by trigger points measured either by a lake level or by the water storage capacity. The Drought Contingency Plan also includes triggers that are associated with how wet or dry it is according to the Palmer Hydrologic Drought Index and pumping duration of the Williamson County Reginal Raw Water Line that is specific to the Lake Georgetown-Stillhouse Hollow subsystem.

Though the System Stage 1 Drought Watch has been lifted, the Brazos River Authority encourages everyone to continue to use water wisely and employ water conservation measures at all times.

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About the Brazos River Authority

The Brazos River Authority, with headquarters in Waco, is the oldest river authority in Texas. Created by the Texas Legislature in 1929, the Authority's 42,000 square-mile territory includes all or part of 70 counties, extending from the Texas-New Mexico border west of Lubbock to the Gulf of Mexico near Freeport.

The BRA built, owns, and operates three reservoirs (Lakes Possum Kingdom, Granbury, and Limestone). In addition to these water supply reservoirs, the BRA contracts with the Corps of Engineers for the water supply storage space at eight federal multi-purpose flood control and water conservation reservoirs (Lakes Whitney, Belton, Proctor, Somerville, Stillhouse Hollow, Granger, Georgetown and Aquilla).

The Brazos River Authority operates a regional wastewater system for the cities of Temple-Belton. The BRA also operates wastewater treatment plants for the cities of Clute-Richwood, Sugar Land, and Hutto. The BRA owns and operates a potable water treatment system, the East Williamson County Regional Water System, for the City of Taylor.

The BRA engages in water quality monitoring activities throughout the Brazos River basin. As a member of the Texas Clean Rivers Program, the BRA samples and tests water from more than 100 locations throughout the basin on either a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. For further information on the Brazos River Authority, please contact Judi Pierce, Public Information Officer at 254-761-3103.