



Red River Basin Commission

Manitoba • Minnesota • North Dakota • South Dakota

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February 9, 2006

Dennis Breitzman, Area Manager
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The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) is a non-profit international organization that operates in Canada and the United States in the Province of Manitoba and the States of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The RRBC 41 member board represents local, provincial, state, and tribal leaders in the area as well as ex-officio representation from federal agencies and legislators at all levels.

Recently, RRBC has completed a Red River Basin (RRB) Natural Resources Framework Plan (NRFP). The NRFP is enclosed with this letter. This NRFP has 13 basin wide goals of which water supply is # 10.

- Goal # 10 is: Ensure the appropriate use and sustainability of the Basin's surface and ground water.

The 2 Objectives under this Goal are:

- o Objective 10.1: Develop a basin-wide strategy to meet current and projected water supply needs.
- o Objective 10.2: Develop water supply emergency management plans for contamination, drought and flooding.

Each goal has objectives and an action agenda that reflect actions by others and RRBC that address the Goals and Objectives. The BOR's water supply study relates in part to Objective 10.1 in NRFP.

In addition to the NRFP, RRBC has underlying Guiding Principles. The Guiding Principles are also enclosed with the letter. The basic theme of the Guiding Principles is to work on problems in the basin together and do no harm to others as solutions are implemented. Additionally, the guiding principles identify that "Conservation is a primary consideration in meeting water supply needs identified in the basin."

At recent Plan Management Committee meetings, the DEIS was discussed. As part of the discussion RRBC members presented jurisdictional and personal

concerns and identified matters that require further work and consideration. RRBC has encouraged the members who provided these comments to evaluate them against the DEIS and to provide comments, as necessary to the BOR. RRBC encourages the BOR to give due consideration to these comments.

RRBC recognizes that there are water supply needs in Eastern North Dakota and Western Minnesota, and also Southern Manitoba. We also recognize that each jurisdiction has the responsibility to address its legitimate and reasonable water supply needs.

RRBC considers in-basin options the most consistent with its Guiding Principles and NRFP goals and objectives. If out-of-basin options are the only reasonable means possible to address the identified needs, then any alternative must adequately protect downstream interests.

RRBC is in the process of developing a strategy to address Objective 10.2 in the NRFP: to facilitate the development of a basin drought plan. In addition RRBC will facilitate discussion between the jurisdictions to address the concerns of downstream interests, such as the identification of what adequate treatment would be in event that an out-of-basin alternative is selected. RRBC is working to complete these two initiatives before the ROD. RRBC asks that the BOR consider input from these two initiatives in determining its recommendation on a preferred water supply option and finalizing its ROD, if the information is provided before the ROD is finalized.

The RRBC would invite the BOR, the Garrison Conservancy District, and other interested parties to participate in these two initiatives.

Sincerely,



Dan Wilkens,
Chair of RRBC



Lance Yohe,
Executive Director, RRBC