

RESOLUTION NO. 8-2003

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS, IN SUPPORT OF THE FORT PHANTOM HILL RESERVOIR WATERSHED BRUSH CONTROL PROJECT.

WHEREAS, the City of Abilene desires to help plan for current and future water needs of Abilene, located in Taylor and Jones Counties and the surrounding region by proposing planning initiatives deemed to be in the best interest of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, water is essential to preserve the quality of life in Abilene, Taylor/Jones Counties and the surrounding region and is the key element that will yield benefits to future generations; and

WHEREAS, the availability and quality of water is vital to the survival of the local economy and a major factor in the continued development and sustainment of economic interests for the future; and

WHEREAS, the key economies of Abilene, Taylor/Jones Counties and the surrounding region depend on ample supplies of water to maintain economic self reliance and the citizens must derive their livelihood from these economies; and

WHEREAS, Abilene, Taylor/Jones Counties and the surrounding region lie in an arid region of Texas with limited sources of both surface and ground water; and

WHEREAS, the region experiences low rainfall; fragile aquifers susceptible to drought conditions; high evaporation rates; vast distances separating municipalities from water sources; and conservation methods beyond those currently in place have limited potential for adding to existing water supplies; and

WHEREAS, though local temperature and precipitation levels have not changed significantly over the last century, it appears that change in stream flow, spring discharge, and increased cedar, mesquite and oak brush have occurred since the first European settlers began to arrive in the area; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that a heavy brush and cedar canopy will capture at least the initial  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch of rainfall before any precipitation reaches the underlying soil; and

WHEREAS, a large portion of the Fort Phantom Hill watershed, the City's main water source, is covered with dense cedar and mesquite trees that consume large quantities of water from the soil, reducing the amount of water for streamflow, spring discharge, and native grass vegetation; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Joint Committee on Water Resources Report to the 78<sup>th</sup> Legislature recommends expanding the role of state assistance programs in funding Watershed Brush Control projects on major reservoir watersheds that are primary water suppliers for a large population; and

WHEREAS, the 77<sup>th</sup> Legislature Session (2001) funded a Lake Fort Phantom Hill Brush Control Feasibility Study which was conducted by the Texas State Soil Conservation Board, the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and the Brazos River Authority; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Phantom Hill Reservoir Watershed Brush Control Feasibility Study estimated a yearly increase of approximately 22,000 acre feet per year of additional water in the Fort Phantom Reservoir; approximately the yearly consumption of the City of Abilene (serving 125,000 citizens); and

WHEREAS, the Fort Phantom Hill Reservoir Watershed Study determined the cost to the State of Texas to be \$29.45 per acre-foot of water -- an inexpensive cost compared to alternative options for water supply projects (i.e., constructing a new reservoir or transferring water from other regions).

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that City Council of the City of Abilene, Texas, urges its State Representatives and Senators to support the appropriation of \$15 million from proceeds received from the sale of Agricultural Water Conservation Bonds and \$9 million in General Revenue dollars to the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board to continue funding new and ongoing brush control projects.

The City Council of the City of Abilene, Texas, further requests that \$3 million of the Texas State Soil and Water Board appropriation be specifically designated for the Lake Fort Phantom Hill Brush Control Project.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Abilene, Texas, this 13 day of March, A.D. 2003.

ATTEST:

  
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CITY SECRETARY

  
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MAYOR

APPROVED:

  
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CITY ATTORNEY