

3/19//08

Time Start: 10:00 am

Time Stop: 10:40 am

Teleconference Call:

Work Group 5 ~ The Council shall conduct a study to evaluate the desirability of requiring the Board to:

1. *Designate as certified water conservation training facilities entities and programs that provide assistance to retail public utilities in developing water conservation plans under Section 13.146; and*
2. *Give preference to certified water conservation training facilities in making loans or grants for water conservation training and education activities.*

Council Members, Alternates & Interested Parties

Spokesperson Bill Hoffman

Karen Guz
C.E. Williams
Scott Swanson
Comer Tuck
John Sutton
Dan Strub

TWDB Staff

Aung Hla
Vanessa Escobar

Spokesperson Bill Hoffman called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and roll call was taken. The workgroup began by briefly reviewing the charge for this workgroup and the language of the legislation:

“ The Council shall conduct a study to evaluate the desirability of requiring the Board to:

1. *Designate as certified water conservation training facilities entities and programs that provide assistance to retail public utilities in developing water conservation plans under Section 13.146; and*
2. *Give preference to certified water conservation training facilities in making loans or grants for water conservation training and education activities.”*

It was stated that the word “program” is one of the key elements to where we want to move our thoughts in this area. It is more important that a program be certified as opposed to certifying a facility. It is also important that the content be certified as one that meets the Texas Water Development Board’s (TWDB) criteria.

It was suggested that it would be a good idea on April 1st that this workgroup present a preliminary draft to the rest of the Water Conservation Advisory Council (Council). We will be sure to emphasize that we are going to concentrate on certifying programs. With the legislation that is written, it would be those programs that could receive assistance from the TWDB in forms of materials, funding, marketing etc.

John gave a few examples of workshops or presentations that the TWDB has been and is involved with to provide guidance to entities across the state ^{Fig 1}. From year to year depending upon legislative initiatives, level of interest, and drought conditions, the level of which those services are provided have changed just because of needs. TWDB is usually heavily involved in participating, planning, and structuring workshops that are provided in Texas. AWWA, TCEQ, Wholesalers, AWE have all worked together for developing these presentations and workshops.

The question was raised if this workgroup is envisioning putting together a certification process for the programs? In response to that, the one concern that we want to address is that there are folks out there that put together these workshops as training services who may not be qualified to be teaching that subject matter, or may not be touching on some core elements that should be addressed when providing training on this topic.

The question was asked, how is the certification process going to work? Does the program have to be approved by TWDB? It was stated that to have the TWDB certify the content of the curriculum would be the overall goal to ensure that the correct things are being taught and that financial assistance from the TWDB is targeted to those who provide the necessary curriculum.

It was pointed out that according to the legislation the TWDB would be the ones designated to certify these programs. These programs must provide assistance to retail public entities in developing their water conservation plans, according to this really specific wording in the legislation.

It was suggested that training elements such as program planning and evaluation planning are the types of topics that would qualify as water conservation training. On the other hand a stand alone irrigation auditing training course for irrigators would not be eligible, but the incorporation of how irrigation auditing would fit into an overall program for a utility would. For the people out there who are already in the business of offering training related to water conservation, this may be seen as a potential opportunity to get a new recognition or funding. So with this specific legislation targeting training for development of plans, one of the things that this workgroup may need to do is define what exactly is meant by “training for development of water conservation plans.” We would need to explain what categories of training this curriculum should encompass, and what it might not encompass.

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The point was brought up that one of the significant recommendations that will be made from this charge is that the term “facility” be defined as a program not a building. This is because we want to avoid certifying a building and focus more on certifying the curriculum of the program. It was suggested that down the line a training program could eventually count as a course that counts for CEUs. It was also stated that down the line a certified program could be used as a required enforcement action of the TCEQ for those entities who have demonstrated a lack of progress in submitting a water conservation plan. Currently there are other organizations such as the Texas Rural Water Association who may have some good input on water conservation training for development of conservation plans.

In our recommendations we should be very clear that we will be considering the terms “facilities” and “programs” interchangeably. It was agreed that as a workgroup and council a better course of action would be to take the liberty of incorporating some of our own definitions. Additionally, we should state in our recommendations that we are not intending to certify “facilities” or “entities” but rather only interested in certifying “programs” or “curriculum”.

Overall, this will be a recommendation to certify curriculum so that there is some assurance that people have the necessary capabilities to be teaching what is required. It was stated that there needs to be a predetermined set of curriculum elements that a program should provide, and how those elements are met can be with varying approaches i.e. (Amy Vickers 10 Steps, or a special guest speaker, or a TWDB Presentation etc.)

It was stated that one thing to keep in mind is that this legislation really focuses on a targeted audience (3300+ connection) and on a specific timeline (May 1st 2009 for 1st plans). Additionally sometimes logistics and site locations are challenges of forming a workshop.

It was agreed that this workgroup will provide a first draft of recommendations prior to the April 1st meeting.

The workgroup proposed a name: 'Certified Water Conservation Training.'

Meeting Adjourned at 10:40 am

Figure 1.

<p>Texas Water Development Board Municipal Water Conservation Technical Assistance, Training and Workshops</p> <p><u>Conservation and Drought Plans</u> Workshops Technical Assistance Guidance Documents Plan Review</p> <p><u>Water Loss, Water Audit and Leak Detection</u> Training Workshops Equipment Loan Water Audit Manual</p> <p><u>Education and Outreach</u> Major Rivers (4th / 5th grade curriculum) teacher's workshops Raising Your Water IQ (middle school) workshops and online activities Brochures and pamphlets Displays and site activities</p> <p><u>Non-Residential (Commercial and Institutional)</u> Workshops</p>
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Immediate Actions	Long Term Actions
Bill Hoffman will provide a first draft of recommendations to the workgroup members prior to the April 1 st meeting for comments and suggestions.	The Council will work to develop a formal recommendation.
Workgroup 5 will provide a first draft of recommendations to the Council members at the April 1 st meeting to begin process.	