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## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding CTSUD Drought Response

### Background:

Chisholm Trail Special Utility District (“the District”) co-owns, with the City of Georgetown, the Lake Georgetown Water Treatment Plant. The District owns approximately 4.5 million gallon/day of potable water from the water plant. The District also utilizes wells that under normal conditions, produce an additional 2 million gallons per day of potable water. The combined surface water from Lake Georgetown and the wells allows the District to deliver about 6.5 million gallon per day during peak periods. This quantity of water can be delivered for limited periods of time after which storage tanks must be allowed time to recharge. In the month of July one major well was taken offline because the water table in the Edwards Aquifer became dangerously low. The demand for water peaked to a historical all time high. This loss of the well combined with the severe heat and drought caused the District to declare Stage III water restrictions to ensure a safe and reliable source of drinking water for our customers could be provided. Due to continuing aquifer deterioration in the month of August, the second well became dangerously low and is being cycled through periods of use and nonuse to allow it to recharge. The loss of well water has caused the current interim Stage 4 Drought restrictions.

### FAQ

**Q: Does Chisholm Trail S.U.D. have enough water to serve all current and future customers or is it possible the District will run out of potable water?**

**A:** The District has contracted with Brazos River Authority for a total of 9.91 million gallons of water per day, deliverable to Lake Georgetown from Lake Stillhouse Hollow and Lake Belton via pipelines (both existing and planned). That, in addition to the 2 million gallons per day produced from wells, gives Chisholm Trail S.U.D. the water capacity to service over 30,000 single family homes. Currently the District has just fewer than 6,000 customers.

**Q: If Chisholm Trail S.U.D. has all this water, how do we now find ourselves in a declared Stage 4 drought situation, with no outside irrigation allowed?**

**A:** The issue is one of short term treatment capacity. The water that is used for both households and irrigation has to be treated to meet or exceed the Environmental Protection Agency and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality standards. The current drought has been more severe than the worst drought in recent history (the drought of 1957 – 1958) and demand for treated water for both household use and outside irrigation has skyrocketed beyond the District’s present capacity. To ensure that all customers have enough water for household uses, the District chose to ban outdoor irrigation systems to conserve the water supply. Outdoor irrigation has increased the demand for water by over 30% and with the wells out of service because of low aquifer levels, the District can’t meet current demands.

**Q: What is the District doing to rectify this short-term treatment issue and plan for near term and long term population growth?**

**A:** The District is currently involved in the following projects to enlarge its supply of treated water capacity and find new sources of potable water:

1. The District is working with the City of Georgetown to enlarge the existing Lake Georgetown Water Treatment Plant. This will expand the total treated water capacity from Lake Georgetown by 11 million gallons per day of which the District will own a total of 9.5 million gallons per day. This project's projected completion is November 2010.
2. The District is working with the Brazos River Authority to install larger pumps in Lake Stillhouse Hollow to bring more water into Lake Georgetown via the Williamson County Regional Raw Water Pipeline. This project's projected completion date is June 2010.
3. The District is planning a new water treatment plant on the south shore of Lake Georgetown to fully utilize the 9.91 million gallons of water capacity owned in Lake Georgetown.
4. The District is working with several entities to develop a plan to bring water from the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer to the District's service area.

**Q: Why didn't planning on these projects start sooner so these restrictions could have been avoided?**

**A:** Planning for capital projects has been ongoing for many years. The Board of Directors has tried to strike a balance between growth in new customers, contributions from developers for large subdivisions, and issuance of new debt to finance these expensive projects. The Board has also attempted to minimize the burden to District rate payers by estimating the need for new infrastructure. This requires a balance to ensure the investment in infrastructure does not occur either too soon or too late.

**Q: How does my water rate increase factor into this?**

**A:** To finance the capital projects, the Board of Directors is using cash on hand and the recent issuance of \$6 million in revenue bonds to pay for these near term improvements. The rate increase that the Board enacted beginning with October 1<sup>st</sup> consumption is primarily to fund the additional debt service for capital projects such as these. This is the reason water rates were increased in the minimum bill and bottom tiers – to ensure that in both wet years and dry years Chisholm Trail S.U.D. will be able to meet the debt service obligations.