



**Save Our Springs Alliance Urges “No” Vote on State Proposition 6:
\$2 Billion Pork Barrel Creates Mirage, Leading Us Away from A Water Secure Future**

Despite weekend rains, Texas faces severe water challenges. We owe it to ourselves and our children to face these challenges with facts, creativity, and action.

Proposition 6 paints a mirage on our water future – drawing us away, not toward, water security. Pursuing this false future will do more harm than good for our cities, small towns, rivers, aquifers, and statewide economy.

Responsible action requires starting with facts, priorities and a solid plan. Proposition 6 and the \$53 billion State Water Plan it would help fund both fail on all three points.

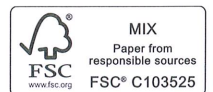
Water experts and politicians from both parties agree that investing in water conservation is the cheapest and most reliable way to meet our future water needs. In fact, statewide – and national -- water use has remained essentially flat for more than 30 years. Gains in water efficiency have kept pace with population growth, and can keep doing so for decades to come.

Yet the Texas Water Development Board's recently adopted 250-page, 50-year State Water Plan devotes one single paragraph to water conservation. Instead, the Plan proposes \$53 billion in spending – almost all of it committed to draining limited water supplies even faster to serve decades more of wasteful water use in our growing cities.

While taking rural water to the cities – at great harm to our rivers, aquifers, and rural economies – the \$53 billion price tag only delivers raw water to city ratepayers. Almost \$200 billion more is needed to build plants to treat the water and then treat the resulting sewage. Throw in pumping costs and the amount of money diverted from other investments that would actually benefit Texas residents and businesses is simply staggering.

The Water Board proposes the largest amount of spending to serve projected future water demands for the Dallas-Fort Worth metro region. A TWDB project list from March for near-term projects calls for \$2.3 billion in new pipelines and \$900 million in new reservoirs for DFW. The same list budgets \$1.2 million for conservation. That’s 0.03 percent for the cheapest and most reliable strategy for meeting future water needs.

It gets worse. The DFW metro region uses roughly a third more water on a per capita basis than any other metro region in Texas. DFW water needs can easily be met for 30 years into the future through much cheaper investments in efficiency and reuse.



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Why should Texas taxpayers subsidize decades more of water waste in DFW? Even with state subsidies, DFW businesses and residents will pay the highest cost of implementing a strategy that hurts rural East Texas and Texas rivers and estuaries without benefiting DFW one drop.

For central Texas, Proposition 6 funds would likely bankroll private water pipelines delivering Simsboro and Carrizo-Wilcox water to the I-35 corridor and on into the Hill Country. These are hundreds of millions of dollars of projects that threaten rural water supplies while requiring enormous energy use and pumping costs.

While central Texas is already much more efficient in water use than the DFW region, our only secure and affordable water future is not found in pipelines or the State Water Plan. We too can easily meet decades of future water demands by building a more water efficient economy.

Texas business leaders should be leading the charge against Proposition 6 and the staggering costs the State Water Plan will impose on businesses and residents alike in the years ahead. Yet, as Texas Monthly writer Paul Burka recently observed, Texas is now largely devoid of business leaders.

The business establishment has refused to see that the only secure, affordable, and business-friendly path forward is to build a water-efficient economy. Instead, much of the business establishment is backing the big construction and engineering firms and water hustlers who are waiting for their Proposition 6 pay checks.

Some environmental groups are also endorsing Proposition 6 because the state legislature has tentatively earmarked 20 percent of the Proposition 6 funds for water conservation. We recognize this point of view. But we need water conservation investments first and instead of the wasteful projects in State Water Plan, not thrown in as a small “also” or afterthought.

Every indication is that Rick Perry’s Water Development Board appointees will fund the big ticket environmentally-damaging projects in the State Water Plan first. Once spent, how will these funds be paid back? By encouraging decades more of wasteful water use by ratepayers.

We simply cannot build our way out of limited water resources. We can, however, save, innovate, and reuse, protecting urban and rural economies, rivers, and ratepayers. We don’t need a \$2 billion slush fund to pursue a safe water future for Texas.

Proposition 6 invites voters to hit the panic button and run towards a very expensive, deceptive, and damaging mirage. A safe and affordable water future for Texas lies in a different direction.

We respectfully urge a “no” vote on Proposition 6.