



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SJRA Proposes Refunds for Water Customers**

Conroe, Texas—San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) General Manager Aubrey Spear, PE proposed a plan today that includes refunding \$12 million to wholesale water customers that are participants in SJRA’s Groundwater Reduction Plan (GRP).

Additional funds became available when two non-paying GRP participants paid money that was owed to SJRA along with an unanticipated increase in revenue to the GRP due to recent droughts in the area. The proposed plan provides a credit to GRP participants based on their prorated share of water used during the drought period. Along with the refund, the additional funds will be used to pay down bonds secured in 2012 and 2013 to construct the surface water treatment plant at Lake Conroe and the related transmission lines and facilities necessary to supply some GRP participants with surface water. Paying down the debt will benefit the GRP participants financially as it could mean a reduction in rates for all participants.

The SJRA GRP has 80 customers under contract, of which seven receive surface water. The 80 customers are represented by a GRP Review Committee that meets monthly to determine expectations and make policy recommendations regarding the GRP. Spear’s presentation was made to the GRP Review Committee today at their monthly meeting.

The GRP Review Committee voted in favor of the refund and bond debt defeasance. The proposal must still be considered by the SJRA Board of Directors at their March 28 meeting.

“We want to give this money back to you [the participants] through the budgetary process,” said SJRA General Manager Aubrey Spear. “I feel our staff and our board members want to do the right thing and apply these funds to participant’s accounts.”

The SJRA’s GRP participants are area retail water providers including cities, municipal utility districts, and independently owned utilities. SJRA does not set the retail rates charged to individual retail customers. That is the responsibility of the retail water provider or municipality. For more information on household bills, individuals are urged to contact their retail provider.

Background

More than 30 GRPs exist in Montgomery County. The SJRA GRP participants consist of more than 80 public and private water utilities who partnered with SJRA in 2010 to implement a joint, countywide GRP in direct response to requirements set by the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District (LSGCD) to conserve groundwater (aquifer) supply. SJRA GRP participants include the cities of Conroe, Magnolia, Splendora and Oak Ridge North, as well as a number of investor-owned utilities and a number of municipal utility districts located east and west of Interstate 45.

The GRP infrastructure is made up of a surface water treatment plant and a 55-mile pipeline system that cost approximately \$500 million to construct in 2011 through 2015. The SJRA GRP goal is to supplement groundwater (aquifer) usage with treated surface water from Lake Conroe to not only provide an alternative water source that complied with LSGCD mandates, but to also be prepared for accelerated growth and water demand in Montgomery County. The GRP contracts include provisions for a GRP customer committee comprised of GRP participants, called the GRP Review Committee. This committee holds monthly public meetings, reviews the GRP budget and project plans, and makes recommendations on GRP policy to SJRA's Board of Directors.

One of the major river authorities in Texas, SJRA's mission is to develop, conserve, and protect the water resources of the San Jacinto River basin. Covering all or part of seven counties, the organization's jurisdiction includes the entire San Jacinto River watershed, excluding Harris County. For additional information on SJRA visit our website at [www.sjra.net](http://www.sjra.net), like SJRA on Facebook [@SanJacintoRiverAuthority](https://www.facebook.com/SanJacintoRiverAuthority), or follow us on Twitter [@SJRA\\_1937](https://twitter.com/SJRA_1937), or find us on Instagram [@SanJacintoRiverAuthoritySJRA](https://www.instagram.com/SanJacintoRiverAuthoritySJRA).

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