

## *Creation of a statewide water conservation awareness campaign*

At local, regional, and statewide levels, water conservation and efficiency continue to be a crucial strategy for meeting our growing water demands. Conservation and efficiency targets can be advanced through various strategies such as water loss reduction, plumbing and fixture codes, etc, but must also be addressed through public awareness and behavioral/cultural changes. While some entities are working to advance water conservation public awareness through localized campaigns, Texas has not yet funded a statewide, coordinated approach to water conservation public awareness.

The need for a statewide water awareness campaign is not new:

**2004:** Water Conservation Implementation Task Force discusses the need for a coordinated, statewide water conservation public awareness campaign. Texas Water Foundation initiates and funds statewide polling to identify how different population segments value water. This data leads to the creation of the Texas Water Development Board's Water IQ in 2007, a public awareness program aimed to increase knowledge of drinking water.

**2007:** Texas Legislature formalized the need for a public awareness campaign by adding it to Texas Water Code, which reads "The executive administrator shall develop and implement a statewide water conservation public awareness program to educate residents of this state about water conservation. The program shall take into account the differences in water conservation needs of various geographic regions of the state and shall be designed to complement and support existing local and regional water conservation programs." (Texas Water Code §16.401)

**2013:** The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) staff in the Government Effectiveness & Efficiency Report (GEER), suggested a \$6 million appropriation for the biennium for Water IQ as part of its recommendations to "Enhance State Participation in Municipal Water Conservation," noting that the program could help lower water use by Texans. The LBB staff calculated in 2013 that a reduction in water consumption of just one gallon per capita per day by all Texans could avoid \$407.2 million of the \$53.1 billion in capital costs that had been projected by the 2012 State Water Plan.

**2019:** Water Conservation Advisory Council made a legislative recommendation that the Texas Legislature appropriate up to \$3 million per year to the TWDB to implement a statewide water conservation public awareness program, as directed by the Legislature in 2007 with the passage of Senate Bill 3 and House Bill 4.

Draft Legislative Recommendation:  
Statewide Public Awareness Campaign  
WCAC Report 2022

Although there is a need to increase the public's knowledge of water efficiency and its relationship in meeting current and future water demands, there were no funds specifically appropriated to the TWDB for the program in 2005 or in subsequent legislative sessions. Since then, some local and regional entities have worked to advance water awareness within their respective service areas. Recognizing the need to support entities without a formal campaign and have a more coordinated (or unified) approach statewide, nonprofit Texas Water Foundation has worked to advance a statewide water awareness campaign, piloting a framework in three different markets.

***The council recommends that the Texas Legislature reaffirm its support for the creation of a statewide water conservation public awareness program as directed by the Legislature in 2007 with the passage of Senate Bill 3 and House Bill 4.***