

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Sabine River Authority Moves Forward with Pump Station Project**

(Orange, TX) The Sabine River Authority of Texas (SRA) will construct a new modern pumping facility in Southeast Texas to ensure a reliable water supply for customers in Orange and Newton County. The 85 million gallons per day (MGD) raw water pump station will be built in Newton County along the main stem of the Sabine River south of Highway 12 near Deweyville. In addition to the pump station a 66-inch diameter pipeline will be constructed to convey the raw water from the new pump station to SRA's existing John W. Simmons Gulf Coast Canal System (Canal System) in Orange County. The proposed pipeline will be constructed within a right-of-way that SRA is currently in the process of acquiring. It is SRA's intention to work with each affected landowner to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. The proposed alignment for the pipeline was carefully selected to eliminate the need for acquiring a single structure and to minimize impacts on landowners.

In July of 2016, the Texas Water Development Board approved \$75 million of funding for the pump station and pipeline project in the form of a multi-year loan commitment from the State Water Implementation Revenue Fund for Texas (SWIFT) program. Currently the pump station and pipeline project is in the preliminary design and permitting phase with plans for construction to be completed in 2020.

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The existing pump station, constructed in 1934, provides water to local industry and municipal customers in Orange and Newton County. The infrastructure and location of the existing pump station, as well as changes within the river, have occasionally limited SRA's ability to withdraw water from the river. During natural low flow and drought conditions, SRA has released water from upstream Toledo Bend Reservoir to raise the level of the river at the existing pump station's intake canal so that water can be pumped to these customers. The new pump station will conserve water and provide a more reliable source of water to SRA's current and future customers.

In 2011, SRA conducted a study evaluating different locations to construct the new pump station. After an in-depth review of possible locations and impacts to water rates, land for the pump station was purchased in Newton County near Highway 12 upstream of the existing pump station in August of 2013. The pipeline alignment has been identified during preliminary design and SRA is currently working with landowners to acquire the right of way. Land activities for the new pump station and pipeline project are not part of the current FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The HMGP program is administered by Newton County and landowner participation is entirely voluntary. Additional information on the HMGP can be found at the following website or by contacting Newton County:

<https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-grant-program>

Lastly, to alleviate any concerns, SRA currently has no plans to construct a reservoir downstream of Toledo Bend. Toledo Bend Reservoir, with a total capacity of 4,477,000 acre-ft of water supply available, has only 92,757 acre-ft (roughly 2-percent) committed through water supply contracts in Texas and Louisiana.

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The volume of water in Toledo Bend is much greater than the downstream water supply needs including the proposed Sasol facility in the Lake Charles area. Although the US Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation identified two potential reservoir sites (Big Cow Creek and Bon Weir) downstream of Toledo Bend in studies as early as the 1950's, the need to build these reservoirs today no longer exists. Furthermore, the most recent Texas State Water Plan, which looks at a 50-year planning horizon, makes no mention of the Big Cow Creek or Bon Weir reservoirs to meet the future water demands,

Created by the Legislature in 1949, the Sabine River Authority of Texas is an official agency of the State of Texas. The Authority was created as a conservation and reclamation district with responsibilities to control, store, preserve, and distribute the waters of the Sabine River and its tributary streams for useful purposes.

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