

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Texas Water Development Board Approves SWIFT Funding for Sabine River Authority**

(Orange, TX) A new modern facility ensuring dependable water to local industries and municipalities will be constructed in Southeast Texas thanks to the Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB) approval of financial assistance to the Sabine River Authority of Texas (SRA). TWDB Board Members Bech Bruun, Kathleen Jackson and Peter Lake approved a \$75 million multi-year loan to SRA through the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) program in a TWDB board meeting on July 21, 2016. SRA will use the assistance to finance the planning, acquisition, design and construction costs of a new 85 million gallons per day (MGD) raw water pump station along the Sabine River.

The existing SRA pump station, constructed in 1934, provides water to local industry and municipal customers in Orange and Newton County through the John W. Simmons Gulf Coast Canal System. The infrastructure and location of the existing pump station, as well as changes within the river, have occasionally limited SRA's ability to draw water from the river. During natural low flow and drought conditions, SRA has had to release water from upstream Toledo Bend Reservoir to raise the level of the river at the main pump station's intake canal so that water can be pumped to these customers. The new pump station will conserve water by reducing the need to release water from Toledo Bend Reservoir during periods of low flow along the river and provide a more reliable source of water to SRA's current and future customers.

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The TWDB administers cost-effective financial assistance programs for construction of water system improvement projects throughout the State of Texas. The SWIFT program, which was passed by the Legislature and approved by Texas voters through a constitutional amendment, helps water districts and communities develop and optimize water supplies at cost-effective rates. The overall goal of the program is to provide \$27 billion in state water plan projects over the next 50 years.

Southeast Texas is very well represented at the Texas Water Development Board. Kathleen Jackson was appointed to the TWDB by Governor Rick Perry in 2014, and reappointed to a new term by Governor Greg Abbott in 2015. Ms. Jackson, a registered professional engineer, has a diverse background representing agricultural, environmental, industrial, and wholesale supply interests, which includes developing and implementing water management strategies for Southeast Texas. She served on the Lower Neches Valley Authority Board and many other water stakeholder committees. State Representative Dade Phelan is one of three House of Representatives recently appointed to the SWIFT Advisory Committee by Speaker Joe Straus. Representative Phelan understands the challenges of water planning, development and conservation and also served on the Lower Neches Valley Authority Board. “As a member of the SWIFT Advisory Committee, I know firsthand how competitive and rigorous the loan application process can be,” stated Representative Dade Phelan. “I applaud the Sabine River Authority for gaining approval for one of the largest conservation projects to date from the SWIFT and appreciate the Texas Water Development Board’s support. This new pump station will ensure the future reliability of Toledo Bend for generations to come,” added Representative Phelan.

The first cycle of funding through the SWIFT program financed approximately \$900 million in state water plan projects. The TWDB’s approval of SRA’s new pump station project falls in the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of the very successful program. “SRA appreciates the TWDB Board’s approval of our project in the SWIFT program,” stated David Montagne, General Manager for SRA. “We applaud the accomplishments of the

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TWDB to assist in the development of reliable and dependable water supplies for Texas and look forward to working with the Board and Staff to construct this new project for Southeast Texas,” added Montagne.

Created by the Legislature in 1949, the Sabine River Authority 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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