



**The Tennessee Advisory Commission  
on Intergovernmental Relations**



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Suite 508  
226 Capitol Blvd. Building  
Nashville, TN 37243-0760  
Phone: (615) 741-3012  
Fax: (615) 532-2443  
[www.tn.gov/tacir](http://www.tn.gov/tacir)

## ***MEMORANDUM***

**TO:** TACIR Commission Members

**FROM:** Harry A. Green  
Executive Director

**DATE:** July 1, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Regional Water Supply Pilots

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TACIR has had a major interest in water supply issues since 2007 as a result of the drought and the relationship to the infrastructure project. At that time, TACIR staff researched the problems and participated in panel discussions about water supply issues and shortages and developed a body of information about the drought and the significance of future water supply planning. The staff presentations included

- 1) Advisory Commission, October 2007,
- 2) Tennessee County Services Association annual conference, October 2007,
- 3) American Society of Public Administration, December 2007,
- 4) Williamson County at the request of Mayor Rogers Anderson, December 2007, and
- 5) Columbia State, February 2008.

A Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC) was authorized by a general act of the General Assembly in 2002 as a part of the Tennessee Water Resources Information Act. The Act directed the Commissioner of TDEC to appoint the committee to advise the department on the status of the state's water resources and future planning efforts and left the membership of the committee to the discretion of the commissioner. The committee was activated when the seriousness of the 2007 drought became apparent and started meeting in 2008. TACIR is a participating member of the committee.

During the period of the drought, a bill was filed in the legislature that would have mandated that all water providers engage in a long-term planning process and produce a

plan for future water supplies. The bill did not pass since it was an unfunded mandate, but it generated a good bit of discussion. In the aftermath of that discussion, TDEC decided to engage in a planning process for two “pilot” plans with the WRTAC being the coordinating body for the plans. The two areas selected for the pilots were heavily impacted by the drought.

The Department of Environment and Conservation is the lead agency for the preparation of the two pilot plans: one for the South Cumberland Plateau area and one for the North Sumner County area. They have contracted with the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Geological Survey to analyze water usage and future demand and the Nature Conservancy to analyze environmental conditions. TDEC is looking to TACIR for editing support in the preparation of the plans and to write a chapter on the regional characteristics of government structure, planning efforts, economic development, population growth, and local geography, as well as a chapter on fiscal capacity and financial issues. The state Office of Local Planning Assistance is providing existing land use data and mapping expertise.

Each pilot plan will contain the following types of information:

- a description of the area’s physiographic characteristics, governmental structure, capabilities for planning, population characteristics, economic trends and environmental limitations
- analysis of existing water usage, sources of supply and identification of water systems operating in the area
- projections of future demand for water supplies
- potential sources of future supplies and capability to meet future demand
- financial capacity of water systems to meet future demands

According to TDEC, the pilot plans should be an essential element in dealing not only with future water supplies but also a basis for regional planning in the state. TDEC committed \$500,000 to prepare the plans. The Corps of Engineers agreed to match that amount and has spent about \$235,000 of that matching share to date. The Corps plans to use the plans as the basis for making all water infrastructure improvements in the future. The U.S. Geological Survey committed \$30,000 to the project, and the Nature Conservancy committed \$50,000.

TACIR’s involvement in the water supply and planning issues has been a part of the work plan since 2008. In the work plan dated June 11, 2008, there are three items referring to water under the heading of “Infrastructure.” These are

- complete report on water infrastructure needs,
- participation as a member of the Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee, and

- continued review of water resource allocation in Tennessee as it relates to growth and scarcity.

In the work plan dated June 30, 2009, there are three items referring to water under the heading of "TACIR Initiated." These are

- continue to review water resource allocation in Tennessee as it relates to growth and scarcity,
- act as lead agency for designated chapters of two water resource planning pilots and for compilation of overall pilot reports, as requested by TDEC, and
- serve on TDEC's Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee authorized by TCA § 69-7-309.

In 2009, the General Assembly passed a bill, now Public Chapter 588, which created a joint study committee on water planning. The committee was chaired by Rep. Bill Harmon from Sequatchie County, and it was charged with studying and recommending a path to engage in comprehensive water planning. Presentations were made to this committee by TDEC, TACIR, and other participating agencies. A final report was made to the General Assembly, and that report highlighted TACIR's role in the plans. A copy of the letter of transmission from Rep. Harmon to the Chief Clerk is attached.

The pilot plans are to be completed by the end of this year. It is not known at this time if any legislation may be generated by the planning process.



**Bill Harmon**  
 State Representative  
 Home:  
 107 Harmon Drive North  
 Dunlap, Tennessee 37327  
 (423) 949-2952  
 Legislative Office:  
 24 Legislative Plaza  
 Nashville, Tennessee 37243  
 rep.bill.harmon@capitol.tn.gov  
 Phone (615) 741-6849  
 Fax (615) 253-0264

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Burney Durham, Chief Clerk  
 FROM: Chairman Bill Harmon   
 SUBJECT: Report on Water Planning in Tennessee General Assembly

Public Chapter 588 of 2009 created a special joint committee to study and develop ways and means to implement comprehensive water planning in Tennessee, both at the state level and the local level of public water systems. The joint committee is required to report its findings to the 106<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. The joint committee met October 19 and 20, and November 5, 2009. As chairman of the joint committee I am submitting the attached report as required by Public Chapter 588. The joint committee was particularly interested to see the results of the plans for the two pilot projects that TACIR (Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations) is compiling in cooperation with TDEC and other state and federal agencies.

Attachment

Grundy Marion Sequatchie Van Buren