

## **H.R. 6007: North Texas Zebra Mussel Barrier Act of 2012**

**Congressman Pete Sessions (TX32)**

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to be here today. I come before in support of H.R. 6007, the North Texas Zebra Mussel Barrier Act of 2012, and urge its immediate consideration. H.R. 6007 provides an elegant solution to a growing problem. Currently, 1.6 million customers of the North Texas Municipal Water District, many of whom are my constituents, have restricted access to water as a result of the discovery of zebra mussels in Lake Texoma and because of the incorrect relocation the District's Lake Texoma intake station into Oklahoma rather than Texas. This surveyor's error, made more than a decade ago by the Red River Boundary Compact, means that water transfers of zebra mussels now cross a state line which in turn triggers the Lacey Act. In response, the North Texas Municipal Water District has been forced to suspend all pumping from Lake Texoma for the past three years. This water source constitutes roughly 28% of the North Texas Municipal Water District's available supply of raw water. Such a reduction in available resources has put a tremendous stress on the District and its ability to assure its customers that there will be an adequate supply of water in the future.

H.R. 6007 would allow North Texas Municipal Water District to resume water transfers from Lake Texoma through a completely closed conveyance system that delivers water directly into their water treatment facility. To achieve this, the North Texas Municipal Water District has committed approximately \$300 million to build a 46-mile long pipeline. The District has approved the funding and obtained the 404 permits required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers necessary to begin construction.

Such a conveyance system would provide safe and dependable means for the District to access the water they have legal rights to while ensuring, with 100% reliability, that Zebra Mussels will not be transferred into Texas waters. Their treatment facility will employ chemical and mechanical means of filtration to eliminate any risk of propagation of invasive species. Such techniques have been proven successful in other areas of the country and have been approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Ultimately, H.R. 6007 seeks to restore an adequate and steady stream of water to over 1.6 million Texans who depend on the North Texas Municipal Water District to supply this valuable and necessary resource without the use of taxpayer dollars while complying with the Lacey Act's intended goal of preventing the spread of invasive species.