

# Texas Must Invest in: REHABILITATING AGING, DETERIORATING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE



Texas' aging, deteriorating water infrastructure threatens economic growth and community vitality. In 2022, major stories about broken systems and boil water notices in cities such as Laredo, Odessa, Houston and other communities across Texas indicated a water sector in peril. To help address this crisis before it gets worse, **Texas should invest \$5 billion of its budget surplus to help address aging and failing water systems.**

## Failing Infrastructure Diminishes Water Supplies When Texas Can Least Afford Wasting Water

### 7.1 million

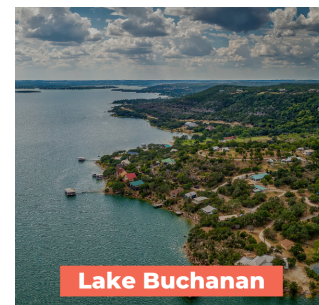
Texans living in drought-affected areas as of January 2023.  
*(Source: US Drought Monitor)*

### 572,000

Acre feet of water lost annually due to leaky pipes across Texas.  
*(Source: Texas Living Waters Project)*



Possum Kingdom Lake



Lake Buchanan

**Annual water loss** due to failing infrastructure equals a full major reservoir, **like Possum Kingdom Lake or Lake Buchanan.**



**Texas' aging, leaking water systems** lose as much water as Austin, Fort Worth, El Paso, Laredo and Lubbock combined use per year.

*(Source: Texas Living Waters Project)*

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a new, constitutionally-dedicated fund – or modify an existing fund – to address the problems with aging, deteriorating water and wastewater systems.
- Appropriate \$5 billion out of the current budget surplus to the new fund and establish a sales or severance tax revenue stream for the fund over the long term.

# Data Points to Systems in Crisis

## State Infrastructure Grades

**C-** water infrastructure

**D** wastewater infrastructure

(Source: American Society of Civil Engineers)

## Approximately,

**70%**

of Texas water infrastructure is past its useful life.

(Source: American Water Works Association)

An average of **2,200 boil water notices** per year since 2018.

Over **5,000 sanitary sewer overflows** per year since 2016.

(Source: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)

**89%**

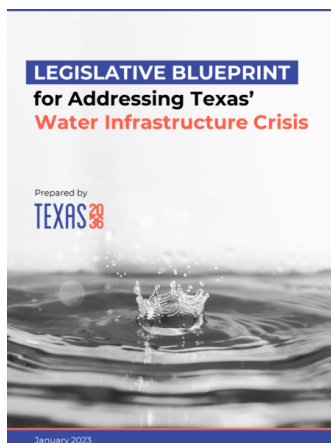
of Texas voters **support using \$5 billion** of the budget surplus funds to help Texas communities fix aging water infrastructure that is leading to broken pipes, significant losses of water and even water boiling notices in some communities.

(Source: Texas 2036 Texas Voter Poll)

Over **10,000** water and wastewater utilities operate in Texas. Many of these utilities serve small, rural, or disadvantaged communities that require effective technical assistance in order to begin fixing their systems.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement a data-driven risk assessment process at TWDB to identify water and wastewater utilities that are either failing or at-risk of failing due to the condition of their systems.
- Expand the state's technical assistance provider corps to provide critical outreach and assistance to small, rural, and disadvantaged communities.
- Leverage the new fund to encourage the regionalization of water and wastewater service delivery to promote economies of scale in source water, workforce and rate base utilization.
- Fully fund the Texas Water Development Board's legislative appropriations request in order to ensure that the agency has the necessary staff capacity and other resources to perform its critical functions relating to infrastructure rehabilitation, water supply development, and flood control. Further, full funding of TWDB's appropriations request ensures that Texas provides the matching dollars needed to draw down federal IJA funds.



Learn more about Texas 2036's Water Infrastructure Blueprint by visiting <https://texas2036.org/water-blueprint/>