



MEDIA RELEASE

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Port Approves Harbor Island Lease to Nueces River Authority

Harbor Island Desalination Project Takes Major Step Forward for South Texas Water Security

ROBSTOWN, TEXAS, JULY 16, 2025 – The Harbor Island Desalination Plant took a major step forward in securing long-term water reliability for South Texas with the approval by the Port of Corpus Christi Commission of a lease with a The Nueces River Authority (NRA). “This is new water for Texas,” said John Byrum, Executive Director of the Nueces River Authority. “This project offers certainty in uncertain times. We now have the site, the strategy, and the support to move forward to deliver water security for decades.”

The lease allows NRA to begin site-specific planning and permitting on Harbor Island, a critical location near the Gulf of Mexico ideally suited for seawater intake and discharge. The Harbor Island Desal Plant will be designed initially to produce 100 MGD, with 38 MGD already reserved for municipalities and water providers across South Texas. In addition, the agreement includes specific provisions allowing the City of Corpus Christi to participate in the project, should it choose to join in the future.

NRA has been actively working to advance this project. On July 10, NRA held a successful Industry Day event which drew more than 140 attendees including leading firms in project design-build delivery, public-private partnerships (P3s), water infrastructure, and equity financing, along with local, regional, and state leaders. The event offered the first opportunity for water infrastructure professionals to gain first-hand knowledge. Key conversations confirmed interest from expert desalination firms from around the world. Participants walked away with valuable information and insight.

Additionally, NRA has been engaging with municipal and industrial water users in South Texas to establish water purchase agreements. NRA has preliminary commitments for 38 MGD of the potential 100 MGD available.



In the coming months, NRA will publish a formal solicitation for a private development partner who will be responsible for the plant’s design, construction, financing, and operations. The agreement will include transferring the plant back to the public after 30 years (DBFOT). The treatment plant will include offshore marine works (seawater intake and brine discharge facilities); onsite power facilities and approximately 6 miles of product water pipelines to transfer the drinking water from Harbor Island to a distribution system delivery point in Aransas Pass. From there, the water will be conveyed along a 148 mile pipeline for distribution to our customers.

“The NRA Team and our partners are working on a project overview and timeline. Our objective is to move forward efficiently to expedite construction of this much needed new source of water,” according to Byrum. “We are excited to launch this next step. In addition, NRA looks forward to discussions with potential customers interested in adding Harbor Island Desal water to their portfolio.

About the Harbor Island Desalination Project

The Harbor Island project is being pursued through a Public-Private Partnership (P3), allowing NRA to leverage private sector innovation, efficiency, and capital. The plant will convert seawater into high-quality drinking water to supplement existing supplies. NRA’s strategic planning has included environmental sampling, regional needs assessments, and infrastructure coordination.

The accompanying Overview provides more details about the project. In addition, information will be posted on the Nueces River Authority’s website at www.nueces-ra.org.

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Attachment: NRA/Desal Overview

The Nueces River Authority was created in 1935 by special act of the 44th Texas Legislature and has broad authority to preserve, protect, and develop surface water resources including flood control, irrigation, navigation, water supply, wastewater treatment, and water quality control.