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News Release

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SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY ADOPTS BUDGET

*Support for capital improvements and maintenance, technology investments,
and sustainability efforts*

(SAN ANTONIO) - On June 21, 2017, the Board of Directors of the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) adopted a \$241.7 million budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017/18, with a General Fund budget of \$41.1 million. The budget is based on a proposed tax rate of \$0.01729, which is unchanged from the two previous fiscal years. The approved budget, which begins on July 1, 2017, supports projects and programs that advance the agency's vision to inspire actions for healthy creeks and rivers.

"The Board and staff have worked closely together to ensure we continue to provide transparency and accountability to all of our constituency throughout this budget process," said Board Chairman, Michael W. Lackey, P.E. "This budget will focus on addressing the important needs of the watershed in the areas of flood mitigation, water quality and operations and maintenance."

The adoption of the budget for FY 2017/18 is based on the proposed tax rate of \$0.01729 per \$100 in property value. This proposed tax rate is unchanged from the existing approved tax rate in place and equates to an estimated \$29.32 to be paid annually by the average homeowner. SARA is authorized by the State Legislature to collect an ad valorem tax at a maximum of \$0.02 per \$100 of assessed value. The tax rate must be set at the same rate throughout SARA's four-county district including Bexar, Wilson, Karnes and Goliad counties and may only be used for planning and operations and maintenance activities. The SARA Board of Directors will take action on the final tax rate in September after receipt of the final property valuations in July. A public hearing will be held prior to adoption of the tax rate.

"The activities targeted in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year contribute to the planning and execution of SARA's strategic plan for the benefit of our agency's four-county service district," said SARA General Manager Suzanne Scott. "This budget is designed to improve the health of the San Antonio River Watershed and the quality of life for the communities we serve."

The approved FY 2017/18 budget is larger than the FY 2016/17 budget due to partner funding provided to SARA for management of major capital improvement projects, primarily the San Pedro Creek Improvements Project, which accounts for nearly \$44 million in the adopted budget. All other major revenues and expenditures remain relatively flat in the upcoming fiscal year.

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Adjustments to the wastewater rates are incorporated as part of the adoption of the annual budget. The rate adjustments will support additional investments within the two wastewater systems that SARA operates. The additional funding will enhance the quality and effectiveness of system operations. A new wastewater treatment plan will be constructed to respond to increased residential growth in SARA's retail service area in northeast Bexar County. Investments to replace or upgrade aging infrastructure in SARA's wholesale service within the cities of Converse, Live Oak, Universal City and Schertz are also planned for the upcoming fiscal year. Rate adjustments to SARA's customers will result in an average monthly increase between \$2.36 and \$4.03 depending on the service area where they reside.

The FY 2017/18 budget consists of the following major areas of activity: Capital Improvements, \$118.3 million; General Fund, \$41.1 million; Utility Operations, \$17.9 million; Grants, \$6.5 million; and Debt Service, \$5.4 million. Budget highlights include:

- Additional investments for the Westside Creeks Restoration Project including San Pedro Creek Improvements, Elmendorf Lake and Linear Creekways Trails projects (Bexar County);
- Additional authorized staff positions to support the operation and maintenance of the public investment in the San Pedro Creek improvements;
- Additional authorized staff positions within the Watershed Engineering department to increase capacity to support the partner funded and internal project workload;
- Investments in the utilities enterprise operations that support capital improvement projects for system assets identified on the ten year capital plans for the SARA Martinez Wastewater System and the Salatrillo Wastewater Treatment plants. Additionally, the construction of the Martinez IV Wastewater Treatment Plant will be completed during the next fiscal year;
- Investments in technology infrastructure and enhancements to enterprise software applications with an emphasis on cyber security (agency-wide);
- Funding is allocated to maintain and enhance scientific models. Specific attention is placed on investments in master plans and the efforts related to work on impervious cover initiatives

Additional highlights and organization narratives can be found within the budget document posted at www.sara-tx.org.

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The San Antonio River Authority (SARA) was created by the 45th Texas Legislature on May 5, 1937 and reorganized in 1961 to plan, manage and implement water-related programs and projects within the San Antonio River Basin. The State of Texas empowered SARA to preserve, protect and manage the resources and the ecology of the San Antonio River and its tributaries. To learn more about the SARA visit our website at www.sara-tx.org.