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## State water board approves plan for two new reservoirs

Northeast Texas lakes would supply Dallas-Fort Worth

Associated Press

AUSTIN - The Texas Water Development Board on Tuesday approved a long-range regional plan that includes building two reservoirs in Northeast Texas and pumping the water hundreds of miles to the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

The 5-1 vote came over the objections of some landowners, business owners and environmentalists who argue the reservoirs would flood and condemn hundreds of thousands of acres. The vote does not guarantee the building of the reservoirs, which is likely several years away.

"The real fight will come when they actually try to build one of these reservoirs," said Janice Bezanson of the environmental group Texas Committee on Natural Resources. "We lost today's skirmish."

The regional water plans are designed to help the state meet the water needs of the next 50 years when the population could nearly double to more than 40 million.

The plan includes the construction of the \$2.1 billion Marvin Nichols Dam on the Sulphur River and the \$569 million Fastrill Dam on the Neches River.

The Marvin Nichols Dam has sparked the most controversy. It is in the strategic plan for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, but water planners in Northeast Texas say they don't want it.

The dam would flood about 72,000 acres and was initially agreed to by Northeast Texas planners. It was later rejected when residents and businesses learned they could lose hundreds of thousands of additional acres to mitigate the flood zone as required by the federal Clean Water Act.

Ralph Heath, president of Fort Worth-based defense contractor Lockheed Martin Co., said the plan with the reservoirs is needed to ensure the Dallas-Fort Worth economy won't suffer because of a lack of water.

Heath said his company is one of the largest water users in Fort Worth but has taken steps to conserve water and would continue to do so.

"No issue is more fundamental for economic prosperity" in the future, Heath said.

Environmentalists argued the Dallas-Fort Worth plan could secure as much water as needed with more conservation and better use of existing resources.