

## **Executive Summary:**

### **Vision of Water Security and Development in Arkansas:**

**With protection of Arkansas's water resources and without obstacles and undue costs, clean, safe water will be provided without discrimination to the citizens of Arkansas in a manner that provides for consumer protection and promotes financially sustainable water providers and systems and residential and economic development.**

### **Summary of Major Problems as Identified by the Water Provider Legislative Task Force that Threaten the Vision of Water Security and Development in Arkansas:**

1. Currently, jurisdiction and oversight of water utilities is spread across a number of governmental agencies with no agency having authority to fully monitor and provide assistance toward the goal of sustainability of water providers and protection of consumers.
2. The State's water infrastructure, is aging and many water providers report no or very limited financial ability to reinvest in the water system to maintain, upgrade, and replace critical aging infrastructure.
3. Some areas of the State are experiencing losses of population; thereby, decreasing the revenue base to in some cases support the day to day operations much less the long term sustainability of the water systems.
4. With aging and retirement of operators across the state, there is a growing deficiency of knowledge and adequately trained and skilled water operators and technical support.
5. Due to concerns over the ability of consumers to pay and the fear of political consequences, many water governing bodies are resistant to institute common business

practices such as full-cost pricing that result in water rates that cover the costs of providing the service, along with maintaining and upgrading the system to ensure future sustainability.

6. Given many municipalities' concerns over both sales tax and ad valorem revenue streams, water access is in some instances is being used as a tool to achieve forced annexation and increased revenue sources.
7. In some areas of the State, water access is being selectively denied within the assigned, exclusive Arkansas Natural Resources Commission service area accepted by the provider.
8. Consumers have limited due process, virtually no security in relation to water provision, at times limited justification for rate structures, and current legislation provides inadequate protection in the court system.
9. Residential and economic development in Arkansas is being thwarted and in some cases totally stopped by the use of water access as a political tool.
10. Other?

## **Summary of Desired Outcomes, Recommendations and Action Plans**