

# JUSTIFICATION FOR COMMERCIAL MORATORIUM

## WRITTEN FINDINGS

### Introduction

The City of Laredo is currently facing a severe water crisis. Both the Falcon and Amistad reservoirs, crucial sources of our water supply, have dropped to all-time low levels as of 2023. This alarming decline necessitates immediate action to conserve our limited water resources. A 2022 study commissioned by the City of Laredo projects that without significant changes, our city will not have adequate water capacity to meet demand by 2044. To address this urgent issue, I propose the implementation of a temporary moratorium on the issuance of permits for new car washes within the geographical boundaries of the City of Laredo.

### Background

Water conservation has become a critical issue for our community due to the following reasons:

*Drought Conditions:* Laredo is experiencing a prolonged drought, severely impacting our water supply. The Falcon and Amistad reservoirs, which provide a significant portion of our water, have seen unprecedented water levels drop.

*Projected Water Shortages:* The 2022 study indicates that the City of Laredo is on a trajectory to face significant water shortages by 2044 unless immediate measures are taken to conserve water.

*High Water Usage by Car Washes:* Car washes are known to consume 65 to 80 gallons of water per vehicle. This high usage rate places a significant burden on our already-strained water resources.

### Rationale for the Moratorium

*Conservation of Water Resources:* The City can significantly reduce non-essential water usage by implementing a moratorium on new car wash permits. This measure will help conserve our precious water resources during this critical drought.

*Health, Safety, and Welfare of Residents:* Ensuring our community has adequate water supplies is essential for maintaining public health and safety. The moratorium will support these goals by reducing water waste and promoting sustainable water use practices.

*Inadequacy of Current Ordinances:* Existing ordinances do not sufficiently address the urgent need to conserve water. The current regulations do not impose adequate restrictions on high-water-use facilities like car washes. This moratorium will give the City the necessary time to develop and implement more effective water conservation policies.

### Scope and Application of the Moratorium

The proposed moratorium will:

Apply only within the geographical boundaries of the City of Laredo.

Restrict the issuance of new permits for car washes to all individuals, businesses, or entities seeking to develop new car wash facilities.

This does not affect those who submitted their applications for permits before the enactment of this moratorium.

### **Duration of the Moratorium**

This moratorium is proposed as a temporary measure. It is recommended that it be in place for a period of 90 days, during which the City will assess its water conservation policies and develop comprehensive strategies to address the water shortage issue.

### **Expected Outcomes**

*Reduced Water Consumption:* By limiting the development of new car washes, the City will reduce overall water consumption, thereby helping to alleviate pressure on our dwindling water resources.

*Increased Awareness and Compliance:* The moratorium will raise awareness about the critical importance of water conservation among residents and businesses. It will also encourage compliance with water-saving practices and policies.

*Long-term Sustainability:* This measure will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Laredo's water supply, helping to ensure that future generations have access to adequate water resources.

### **Conclusion**

Given the severe water crisis facing the City of Laredo, we must take decisive action to conserve our water resources. Implementing a moratorium on the issuance of permits for new car washes is a necessary step to address this urgent issue and safeguard our community's health, safety, and welfare. I strongly recommend that the City Council approve this moratorium and commit to developing more robust water conservation policies in the near future.