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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS

Desalination has potential to alleviate future battles

Special to The Monitor

AUSTIN—Water fights are not new to Texas.

Since before the Lone Star State joined the Union, water rights have been bartered, litigated, fought over, bought and sold for years, and are as contentious today as they have ever been.

A new study from the Texas Public Policy Foundation finds an emerging technology might alleviate those fights in the future.

The study, "Hold The Salt: The Promise Of Desali-

nation For Texas," was written by James Smith, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of Construction Science at Texas A&M University.

This report succinctly explores the opportunities and costs of desalination.

Smith notes if the technology is to be used to the greatest extent possible, it will have to happen as a result of public waterworks allowing the private sector to have an enhanced role in the design, construction, operations and maintenance, and financing

of desalination facilities.

"Declining water resources, coupled with inexorable population growth, demand that the state find alternative solutions for its future water supply needs," Smith wrote. "Desalination is an option with a long history around the world, and it deserves a good look as an option for the future in Texas."

Smith notes three desalination projects are currently undergoing a feasibility study in Texas – at Corpus Christi, Freeport and Brownsville.

Desalination is not just for seawater, Smith noted. It can also be used to make brackish water, found in more arid regions, useful for consumption.

Around the world, some 800 million gallons per day of water is made available through desalination.

"Hold the Salt" and other studies focused on natural resources policy, are available online at www.TexasPolicy.com.

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