ENGROSSED HOUSE
BILL NO. 2450

By: Glover of the House

and

Harrison of the Senate

An Act relating to waters and water rights; amending 82 O.S. 1991, Section 1085.2, as last amended by Section 5, Chapter 329, O.S.L. 1996 (82 O.S. Supp. 1997, Section 1085.2), which relates to authority of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board; authorizing certain agency employees to enter at reasonable times upon certain property for inspections and examinations of records and other memoranda for certain purposes; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 82 O.S. 1991, Section 1085.2, as last amended by Section 5, Chapter 329, O.S.L. 1996 (82 O.S. Supp. 1997, Section 1085.2), is amended to read as follows:

Section 1085.2 In addition to any and all other authority conferred upon it by law, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board shall also have authority:

1. Generally to do all such things as in its judgment may be necessary, proper or expedient in the accomplishment of its duties;

2. To make such contracts and execute such instruments as in the judgment of the Board are necessary or convenient to the

exercise of any of the powers conferred upon it by law. Provided, however, no contract shall be made conveying the title or use of any waters of the State of Oklahoma to any person, firm, corporation or other state or subdivision of government, for sale or use in any other state, unless such contract be specifically authorized by an act of the Oklahoma Legislature and thereafter as approved by it;

3. To negotiate contracts and other agreements with the federal government to arrange for the development of water resources and for the storage and distribution of water for beneficial purposes; provided, however, that the Board shall act in such capacity only as an intermediary in assisting others, and under no circumstances shall the Board have any power or authority to build, construct or finance any waterways, dams or other such projects for itself, except as may be otherwise specifically provided by the laws of this state;

4. To develop statewide and local plans to assure the best and most effective use and control of water to meet both the current and long-range needs of the people of Oklahoma; to cooperate in such planning with any public or private agency, entity or person interested in water, and is directed to prepare such plans for consideration and approval by the Legislature; and to aid, at all times, counties, incorporated cities and towns and special purpose districts in the state in promoting and developing flood control and water conservation in the state;

5. To employ and fix the compensation of such officers, agents, attorneys, technical personnel and employees of the Board as it shall deem necessary to the proper performance of its duties;

6. To adopt and use an official seal;

7. To make such rules, regulations and orders as it may deem necessary or convenient to the exercise of any of the powers or the performance of any of the duties conferred or imposed upon it by this or any other law;

8. To institute and maintain, or to intervene in, any actions or proceedings in or before any court, board, commission or officer of this or any other state or of the United States to stop or prevent any use, misuse, appropriation or taking of any of the waters of this state which is in whole or in part in violation of any law, or of any rules, regulations, orders, judgments or decrees of any court, board, commission or officer of this or any state or of the United States; and to institute and maintain or intervene in any other action or proceeding where the Board deems it necessary to the proper execution and discharge of any of the powers or duties conferred or imposed upon it by law;

9. To determine, charge and receive fees to be collected in advance for the filing and examination of applications for permits to construct water use works; appropriate groundwater; appropriate stream water; establish vested rights; inspect water use works; file other papers; make copies of documents; make prints of maps and drawings; certify copies of documents, maps and drawings; file transfers of water rights; gauge wells and ditches, changes in point of diversion and changes in place of use of water; test wells; hold hearings, make records and provide transcripts of hearings; provided that such fees shall not be collected from any state agency or state institution;

10. To negotiate contracts or water compacts with the federal government or any department or bureau thereof, or with any state in this Union for the purpose of obtaining assistance and cooperation in the accomplishment of the purpose of flood control and water conservation and use in the state. To that end, the Board may match funds with the federal government and with other states upon such terms as shall be agreed upon and approved by the Governor of the state, with the limitation that contracts or water compacts with other states for the division and apportionment of the cost and use of the water controlled by interstate projects shall be submitted to

and approved by the Legislature of the state and the Governor of the state, and Congress and the President of the United States conformable to the State and Federal Constitutions;

11. To accept gifts and grants of money and property or any interest therein;

12. To provide funding from federal and state monies for water and wastewater project purposes to eligible entities for preliminary engineering reports and planning and feasibility studies;

13. To sell or dispose of real or personal property held by the Board when no longer needed in such manner as provided by law;

14. To make appropriations of water to all special purpose districts;

15. To execute and deliver, without actual consideration therefor, a written release of any easement or easement deed heretofore given to the Conservation Commission of the State of Oklahoma, the Planning and Resources Board or the Oklahoma Water Resources Board on lands situated in this state, whenever it shall appear to said Oklahoma Water Resources Board that the need for such easement or easement deed no longer exists; provided, the owner of the lands affected shall file a written application for such release with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board;

16. To adopt, modify or repeal and promulgate standards of quality of the waters of the state and to classify such waters according to their best uses in the interest of the public under such conditions as the Board may prescribe for the prevention, control, and abatement of pollution. The standard of quality of waters of the state adopted by the Board pursuant to the provisions of Section 1085.30 of this title shall be utilized by all appropriate state environmental agencies in implementing their respective duties to abate and prevent pollution to the waters of the state;

17. To review disputes involving service areas or territories, rates for raw or treated water, and abrogation clauses in contracts among municipalities and rural water districts or not-for-profit rural water corporations; to recommend mediation and refer parties in appropriate disputes to mediators and provide technical information to such mediators; and to recommend other means of resolving disputes; provided, that no party to such dispute may initiate action in any district court regarding the dispute until written notice of the dispute has been filed with the Board; provided further that the provisions of this paragraph shall not be construed to diminish any right of access to the court granted to a party by law; ~~and~~

18. To establish an agency special account through the Office of State Finance and the State Treasurer's Office as necessary for the collection and distribution of funds, including funds of sponsors and registration fees related to conferences, meetings and training sessions; and

19. To enter at reasonable times upon any private or public property for inspections and examination of records or other memoranda, and monitoring, investigating and collecting data regarding conditions relating to quality of the waters of the state, all for the purpose of administering the duties and responsibilities of the Board pursuant to or prescribed by law. The Board may designate such authorized representatives and employees of the Board deemed necessary to exercise the provisions of this paragraph.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 1998.

Passed the House of Representatives the 24th day of February, 1998.

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Passed the Senate the ____ day of _____, 1998.

President of the Senate