

BRAZOS G INITIALLY PREPARED 2006 REGIONAL WATER PLAN –
COMMENTS OF NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORS (ORAL)

MY NAME IS MICHELE GANGNES. I AM A RESIDENT OF LEE COUNTY, AND I AM ALSO A BOARD MEMBER AND SPOKESPERSON TODAY FOR NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORS, A GRASS-ROOTS NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION. OUR MEMBERS ARE FAMILIES WHO LIVE IN RURAL CENTRAL TEXAS AS WELL AS OTHER TEXANS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN HOW WATER WILL SHAPE THE FATE OF 21ST CENTURY *RURAL* COMMUNITIES.

NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORS SUPPORTS THE LOST PINES GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT IN ITS EFFORTS TO CONVINCING REGION G THAT THE GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY ESTIMATES FOR LEE COUNTY, NOW SET BY REGION G AT 45,000 ACRE-FEET/YEAR, ARE TOO HIGH. THE SIMULATED PUMPING RATES USED BY REGION G TO SET GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY FOR LEE AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES ARE INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE THAT THE RESULTING DRAWDOWNS WILL BE “ACCEPTABLE,” AS CHARACTERIZED BY REGION G IN ITS PLAN.

LIKEWISE, REGION G HAS NOT DEMONSTRATED THAT THE ESTIMATED RECHARGE FOR LEE COUNTY OF 7,500 ACRE-FEET PER YEAR IS AN UNREASONABLE ALTERNATIVE ESTIMATE OF AVAILABILITY, AS SET BY LOST PINES GCD IN ITS

INITIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN. YOU ARE AWARE BUT HAVE CHOSEN TO UNDERSTATE IN YOUR PLAN, THAT LOST PINES GCD CHANGED ITS MANAGEMENT PLAN TO AVAILABILITY OF 46,000-PLUS ACRE FEET ONLY WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT “BOTTOMS UP” WATER PLANNING MEANS “TOP DOWN” WHEN THE STATE DISAGREES WITH A GROUNDWATER DISTRICT’S PLANNING RESULT.

REGION G PATS ITSELF ON THE BACK IN ITS PLAN FOR CONDUCTING “CONSIDERABLE DEBATE” BEFORE RESOLVING, IN FAVOR OF REGION G AND WITH NO WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE, THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN **45,000** AND **7,500** ACRE-FEET. IN REALITY, THE “**DEBATE**” APPEARED TO YOUR CONSTITUENTS AS NOTHING MORE THAN A CALCULATED ABDICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY BY REGION G’ S MEMBERS. YOU APPEAR TOO WILLING TO RELY ON SELF-INTERESTED CONSULTANTS AND SELF-INTERESTED OR COOPTED MEMBERS IN YOUR DELIBERATIONS. MY NEIGHBORS AND I WILL PAY THE PRICE IF YOU ARE WRONG.

PRESENTATIONS TO REGION G BY DR. ROBERT KIER ON BEHALF OF LOST PINES IN FACT DEMONSTRATE THAT USE OF THE RECHARGE FIGURE OF 7.500 ACRE-FEET IS PROPERLY CONSERVATIVE AND UNDERSTATES AVAILABILITY IN FAVOR OF PROMOTING **SUSTAINABILITY** FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. IF IT’S TOO LOW, IT CAN BE FIXED **FOR** AND **BY** FUTURE GENERATIONS, AS FUTURE SCIENCE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY,

EXPERIENCE PROVIDE GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF AQUIFER DYNAMICS AND AQUIFER HEALTH.

INSTEAD, REGION G IS CHOOSING TO DANGEROUSLY OVERSTATE MY COUNTY'S WATER SUPPLY AND THE SUPPLY OF NEIGHBORING COUNTIES WITH THE RESULT THAT EVERY WEEK BRINGS FORWARD ANOTHER WATER MARKETING SCHEME AND YET ANOTHER PIPELINE SET TO SNAKE THROUGH OUR MIDST. WILL YOU HAVE THE BACKBONE TO TURN OFF THE PUMPS AND REDUCE THE FLOW TO A DISTANT CITY OR WILL YOU, IN THE WORDS OF A FORMER SAN ANTONIO WATER OFFICIAL, JUST TELL THE LOCALS TO "***MOVE SOMEWHERE ELSE?***"

DR KIER HAS CORRECTLY LABELED THE OVERSTATEMENT OF GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY AS A "FALSE PROMISE" THAT MAY BE DISASTROUS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. REGION G SHOULD CHOOSE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RATIONALLY USE AND DEVELOP WATER RESOURCES TO PRODUCE A ***SUSTAINABLE*** SUPPLY. INSTEAD, YOU MAY BE ENCOURAGING A RECORD OF PROTECTING GROUNDWATER RESOURCES THAT WILL SOMEDAY RIVAL THIS STATE'S HISTORY OF FAILING TO PROTECT ITS BAYS AND ESTUARIES. WE SHOULD NOT BE HEADED DOWN THE ROAD OF USING A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THAT RELIES ON STATE-COMMISSIONED COMPUTER MODELS THAT ARE THEN

APPROPRIATED AND MANIPULATED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR PRIVATE GAIN.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT *NO ASSURANCE CURRENTLY EXISTS* THAT THE LONG-TERM DECISIONS REGION G IS MAKING IN ITS 2006 PLAN WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE TO IRREPARABLE DESTRUCTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES. NEITHER COMPUTER MODELS NOR THE PARTIES AND INSTITUTIONS MANIPULATING THOSE MODELS HAVE ESTABLISHED THE CREDIBILITY OR TRUSTWORTHINESS THAT REQUIRE THE DEGREE OF RELIANCE REGION G SEEMS DETERMINED TO GIVE THEM.

PLEASE RECONSIDER AND REALIZE THAT YOU ARE SERVING OUR COUNTIES UP ON A PLATTER. RECONSIDER AND ADOPT OUR GROUNDWATER DISTRICT'S ARGUMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

THE PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS ONLY ONE ELEMENT OF REGION G'S MANDATE IN SENATE BILL 1. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT "CONSERVATION," "PUBLIC WELFARE" AND "PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES" ARE ALSO YOUR CHARGE – OTHERWISE, SOMEDAY YOU WILL BE SITTING HERE REALIZING THAT YOUR DEFINITION OF "AVAILABLE" INCLUDES THE LAST DROP OF WATER IN THE AQUIFER.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO YOU.
NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORS WILL SUBMIT WRITTEN
COMMENTS ON THE INITIALLY PREPARED 2006 PLAN AT A
LATER DATE.

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