Arguments Against The LCRA-SAWS Water Project Outlined

In the eight weeks since I received my LCRA-SAWS packet inviting me to an "informational meeting" I am totally convinced this "water plan" is more moronic than I did that first night!

Since then a citizens group called Guardians of the Colorado River Basin has been formed.

Its' purpose: to oppose the project. We're a tri-county effort made up of folks in Colorado, Wharton and Matagorda counties.

We've had several meetings, including one with four of the best environmental groups in the state: the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, CCA, and Environmental Defense Fund.

We were apprised of the environmental impact this project would have on our area and this State.

Through our meetings and my personal travels, I have met and talked with farmers, ranchers, landowners, city and rural residents, doctors, lawyers, mayors, co-op owners and employees, various type business owners;

Chamber of Commerce employees and directors, newspaper people, WCJC educators, Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists, wildlife specialists serving on LCRA's scientific panel, and good ole boys and housewives.

Here's what I learned:

- Hardly anyone I spoke to had knowledge of this project and its enormity.

- Those who had heard of it had very limited knowledge of its specifics and size.

- When informed of the plan they were first shocked, then angry. A typical response was, "No, they can't do this to us. We won't have it!"

Most all the people I spoke to who had attended the LCRA-SAWS "informational meetings" felt LCRA-SAWS representatives were not adequately informed nor candid with answers to straightforward questions and concerns.

Everyone felt answers were vague, representatives spoke in generalities and they were very adapt at changing the subject.

Not one person I have spoken to felt this project was good for Colorado, Wharton or Matagorda counties, our River or Matagorda Bay.

This opinion was even shared by the scientist I spoke to! I had no one stand up and defend this project or extol its virtues.

Lastly, most every person expressed a sense of great concern and worry. We, the members of the GCRB, are worried too!

When Joe Beal states, "This project would increase the supply of water in our Basin and reduce the demand for water, leaving the Basin better off in several ways," I must disagree.

How can you take all the water the mighty Colorado River can possibly provide, snorkel it up, place it in huge above ground reservoirs, send it to San Antonio, and then you say that you are providing more water in our basin?

Mr. Beal, you are not increasing anything! You are not the Creator! You are simply re-allocating what the Real Creator would do with his water.

I believe that the Good Lord made the Colorado River to run into Matagorda Bay, not into your reservoirs!

It does so to provide a supply of fresh water into the bay and to intermittently purge the estuaries where shrimp, oysters and fish breed and propagate, not for you to capture it and sell it to San Antonio for big money.

Mr. Beal stated it is good to "use another area's (San Antonio) money to pay for conservation and water development and therefore our basin will be better off, not just rice producers, but all water users including cities and industry."

I submit that your statement brings dishonor to the word conservation.

You call sending our River and surface water to San Antonio conservation?

Conservation means "to save." LCRA is entrusted with the responsibility of being the guardian of all that the Basin entails: the land, the wildlife, the people and the water.

The very value of our land is measured by the health of our water.

Let me get this straight: LCRA's going to send and sell our water to San Antonio and you call that conservation!

And your project is going to increase the supply of water in our basin.

I think seventy 24 inch diameter wells 800-1700 feet deep are going to make up the deficit created by sending our rice industry's water to San Antonio.

If those two acts constitute conservation and increasing our Basin's water supply, then you and I think differently.

Is this your so-called effort to create more water by mining our groundwater from the aquifer?

What will pumping of that quantity of water from the ground for 50, possibly 80 years do to the many shallow water wells with their pipes (straws) at a depth of 50 -400 feet?

What will be LCRA's obligation when our personal and small town shallow water wells go dry due to the pumping of these monster wells?

We are not uninformed "hayseeds" – we have common sense!

I believe a good deal of our citizen's concerns could be resolved if you would stop speaking in sugar-coated placations; just use "straight forward Texan speak" with concise, complete information.

We the citizens do not embrace the future with fear and trepidation; we embrace it with hope and enthusiasm for ourselves, our children and their children.

Stop your veiled threats about what will happen to us if your project does not succeed.

We do not believe this LCRA-SAWS pact is either conservation or creation of water by you.

We do not believe sharing drives this project. We feel it is about taking: as in taking our land, taking our river and taking our aquifer.

This project intends to distribute Our water out of Our basin leaving it, and us, in jeopardy.

It is about greed and big money, not conservation and good environmental practices as you espouse.

I own productive rice land in Colorado County and I want the rice industry to survive and prosper.

But I do not think the genesis of this project arose from your concerns about the rice industry.

I feel that you are playing on the emotions of a troubled industry to get your way with our groundwater, the real jewel of your project.

You, LCRA, want to become the water czar and electrical baron of Texas using another area's money to create your infrastructure.

To do so you had to do something worthy sounding with our river water like "share it with San Antonio" and send it west; then express great concern for our rice industry to justify acquiring our groundwater.

How many wells, seventy wells? Where will they be placed? Whose water will be depleted and where will the water in the Colorado River Basin go?

In the beginning of all this, LCRA's concern was for our tri-county rice farmers.

Recently you've added concern for industrial and agricultural growth in the Colorado Basin.

May I suggest a solution for the future water needs of both? Do not send water for Our needs and our future growth to San Antonio!

Leave All our water alone, Colorado River water, surface water and groundwater in our Basin, and we have no water problem.

Mr. Beal, in good faith, how can you say you are caring for the River Basin entrusted to your care while you condemn private property; pump our river to the max sending it west to be sold while greedily eyeing our aquifer to provide you more water to sell locally?

People, are we really going to let this happen in the great State of Texas?

LCRA doesn't own the Colorado River and its basin; we the citizens of the Colorado River Basin do.

It's called a democracy, Mr. Beal; it's about us, not a few elitists with a grandioso scheme.

The Guardians of the Colorado River Basin, the good people of the Basin from the Highlands Lakes to Matagorda Bay and the good people of San Antonio ask for redress.

We ask for a real review of this project and a real public discussion of this project with all of its nuances.

As the project stands we say No to you, Mr. Beal, No to LCRA and No to SAWS.

We intend to fight because we have legitimate and serious differences of opinions.

John Hurr
Property owner in Colorado County

50-280 (Rev. 6-06/2)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The Rice Consolidated Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 6:00 pm August 21, 2006 in the Board Room of the Administration Building Altair, Texas. **The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.**

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax $ 1.30034 /$100 (Proposed rate for maintenance and operations)

School Debt Service Tax Approved by Local Voters $ 0.07130 /$100 (proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Maintenance and operations	11.50000	% increase	or	0.00000 % (decrease)
Debt service	0.00000	% increase	or	0.00000 % (decrease)
Total expenditures	11.00000	% increase	or	0.00000 % (decrease)

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Section 26.04, Tax Code)

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	$ 522,238,665.00	$ 613,831,909.00
Total appraised value* of new property**	$ 3,428,091.00	$ 3,781,150.00
Total taxable value*** of all property	$ 467,369,360.00	$ 554,654,975.00
Total taxable value*** of new property**	$ 3,267,491.00	$ 3,405,470.00

* "Appraised value" is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Section 1.04(8), Tax Code.
** "New property" is defined by Section 26.012(17), Tax Code.
*** "Taxable value" is defined by Section 1.04(10), Tax Code.

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness* $ 1,345,000.00

* Outstanding principal.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	$ 1.42138	$ 0.07648 *	$ 1.49876	$ 5,736.00	$ 2,063.00
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	$ 1.26034	$ 0.07013 *	$ 1.33047	$ 5,882.00	$ 2,059.00
Proposed Rate	$ 1.30034	$ 0.07013 *	$ 1.37047	$ 6,055.00	$ 2,248.00

* The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	$ 48,491.00	$ 52,204.00
Average Taxable Value of Residences	$ 34,290.00	$ 37,849.00
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per $100 Value	$ 1.49786	$ 1.37047
Taxes Due on Average Residence	$ 513.62	$ 518.71
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		$ 5.09

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Rollback Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is 1.37047. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the rollback rate of 1.37047.

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	$ 3,648,113.00
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	$ 56,000.00

This sports utility vehicle was heavily damaged in a two-vehicle accident Thursday that claimed the life of a La Grange woman.

La Grange Woman Killed Near Weimar

A 45-year-old La Grange woman was killed in a two-vehicle accident at 7:07 p.m. Thursday on U.S. 90, approximately 3.5 miles west of Columbus.

The woman was identified as Cynthia Rhode, 45. She was pronounced dead at the scene by Peace Justice Dodie Dungen.

She was driving a 2004 Ford Explorer that hit the back of a Mack truck, driven by Bennie Wilson of Columbus. He was not reported to be injured.

Both vehicles were eastbound at the time of the accident.

A report by the Department of Public Safety said Rhode "failed to control speed while attempting to pass and struck the truck-tractor."

A resident living nearby said he heard "a loud boom" and when he went outside to investigate he saw the wreck.

He said the Explorer had caught on fire after impact and another motorist stopped and used a portable fire extinguisher to put out the fire.

Another neighbor said a witness said that after the Explorer hit the back of the truck-tractor, it became airborne and flipped over.

The woman, who authorities said was not wearing a seatbelt, was ejected from the vehicle.

The accident was investigated by DPS Trooper Kent Tipton. He was assisted by DPS Sgt. Gary Chandler, Thomas Janak, Stephen Pierce and Jeff Pickett.

Also assisting were the Colorado County Sheriff's Office, EMS, and the Columbus Fire Department.

Columbus Livestock Co., Inc.
Todd Keaton, Owner 979-732-2622
Sale Every Thursday
10:30 a.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3
CATTLE ON HAND-1209
HORSES-0 GOATS-0 DONKEY-0
OF SELLERS-242

PACKER COWS		
Higher dressing utility & cutter cows	43-52	
Lower dressing utility & cutter cows	36-43	
Thin Cows	30-35	
PACKER BULLS		
Heavyweight bulls	56-63	
Utility cutter bulls	49-55	
STEERS	#1	#2
200-300 lbs	160-190	130-155
300-400 lbs	142-162	120-140
400-500 lbs	125-140	112-124
500-600 lbs	112-124	100-111
600-700 lbs	108-116	94-106
700-800 lbs	100-108	90-99
HEIFERS	#1	#2
200-300 lbs	145-165	130-144
300-400 lbs	120-140	110-119
400-500 lbs	114-128	106-113
500-600 lbs	105-115	95-104
600-700 lbs	95-105	84-94
700-800 lbs	88-97	80-87
STOCKER COWS		
Good Stocker Cow/calf Pairs	800-900	
Medium Cow/calf Pairs	650-790	
Common Cow/calf Pairs	575-645	
Good Stocker Cows & Heifers	650-775	
Medium Stocker Cows & Heifers	475-600	

Compare Our CD Rates

Bank-issued, FDIC-insured to $100,000

1 year	5.20% APY*	Minimum deposit $5000
3 year	5.15% APY*	Minimum deposit $5000
5 year	5.20% APY*	Minimum deposit $5000

*Annual Percentage Yield (APY)-Interest cannot remain on deposit; periodic payout of interest is required. Early withdrawal is not permitted. Effective 8/7/06. Subject to availability and price change. The amount received from a sale of a CD at current market value may be less than the amount initially invested.

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