

STATE OF TEXAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Carter Casteel

District 73

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An Open Letter to the People of the Guadalupe River Basin

I am very concerned about recent developments that will seriously impact the region's water resources.

After one year of drought in 1996 that shocked the citizens of Texas because of the lack of statewide preparation, the Legislature passed a water planning law in 1997, Senate Bill 1. This legislation established a process for creating grass root plans for meeting the needs of each region of the state. Our region, Region L, produced a plan with projects that were until recently under development.

In June, I read news articles that San Antonio had the third largest population boom in the country last year and is on its way to becoming the 7th largest city in the nation. But disturbingly, I have also been told in the past few weeks that the Region L Water Plan with projects to provide additional water supplies for one of the fastest growing regions of America is falling apart and the projects are being cancelled. How did this happen?

Unfortunately, history is repeating itself as the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) has unilaterally gutted the Region L Water Plan by pulling out of almost all of the major projects to bring water to that city. Maybe even worse, the SAWS master plan's solution for future water needs is simply to buy even more Edwards water. SAWS also refuses to recognize the worst drought on record as the basis for water planning, although that is exactly how the rest of the state – and the country – does water planning. SAWS is going back to its old ways – San Antonio first, and never mind how it affects everyone else who relies on the Edwards Aquifer.

It is no surprise that a bill filed in the current special session, Senate Bill 24, would eliminate the pumping caps for the Edwards Aquifer, and like SAWS, will establish drought limits that will not protect the two largest springs west of the Mississippi River, Comal Springs in New Braunfels and San Marcos Springs in San Marcos. During droughts, these springs are the lifeblood of the Guadalupe River, from San Marcos to Victoria, and San Antonio Bay.

In parallel, the EAA has developed a habitat conservation plan that describes how it will manage the Edwards Aquifer – the plan assumes that the springs will dry up during the kind of drought this region has already experienced!

New Braunfels and San Marcos have stepped up and met their civic responsibility by spending the necessary dollars to supplement their Edwards Aquifer supplies by buying surface water and building water treatment plants. Why not San Antonio?

With the recent chain of events the futures for the Comal and San Marcos Springs, the Guadalupe River and San Antonio Bay are bleak. I will not sit back and watch the lifeblood of our communities dry up.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carter Casteel".

Carter Casteel (R)
Representative, Texas District 73
and Comal Springs

Bandera, Comal, Gillespie, and Kendall Counties