

Member Organizations

Alamo Group of the Sierra Club
Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas
Austin Regional Sierra Club
Bexar Audubon Society
Bexar Green Party
Boerne Together
Cibolo Nature Center
Citizens Allied for Smart Expansion
Citizens for the Protection of Cibolo Creek
Environment Texas
First Universalist Unitarian Church of
San Antonio
Friends of Canyon Lake
Friends of Government Canyon
Fuerza Unida
Green Party of Austin
Headwaters at Incarnate Word
Hays Community Action Network
Helotes Heritage Association
Helotes Nature Center
Hill Country Planning Association
Guadalupe River Road Alliance
Guardians of Lick Creek
Kendall County Well Owners Association
Kinney County Ground Zero
Leon Springs Business Association
Lone Star Chapter of Sierra Club
Medina County Environmental Action
Association
Native Plant Society of Texas – SA
Northwest Interstate Coalition of
Neighborhoods
Preserve Castroville
Preserve Lake Dunlop Association
San Antonio Audubon Society
San Antonio Conservation Society
San Geronimo Nature Center
San Geronimo Valley Alliance
San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance
San Marcos River Foundation
Save Barton Creek Association
Save Our Springs Alliance
Scenic Loop/Boerne Stage Alliance
Securing a Future Environment
SEED Coalition
Solar San Antonio
Sisters of the Divine Providence
Texas Water Alliance
Travis County Green Party
West Texas Springs Alliance
Water Aid – Texas State University
Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation
Wimberley Valley Watershed Association

**PO Box 15618
San Antonio, Texas 78212**

March 23, 2015

Members of the SAWS Water Rate Committee

Re: Agenda Item 3 - REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS
CONCERNING WATER DELIVERY AND WATER SUPPLY RATE STRUCTURES

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

At the insistence of GEAA, hearings on water rate increases for new water supplies and the SAWS 50 year water plan were held in September of 2012. At the hearings that I attended, it was pretty clear that citizens did not want to have their water rates increased in order to supply new development on the north side. Yet, we have learned that SAWS intends to sell water that will promote development almost exclusively to the north of San Antonio – exactly what citizens said they did not want.

As yet, we have seen no recommendations concerning water delivery and rate structure. So, we cannot comment at this time. We understand the financing the Vista Ridge Water Supply Project will require a \$120 annual rate increase, which is a lot considering that 25.8 % of SAWS ratepayers live at or below the poverty level. Nearly 10% are getting by with incomes below half of the poverty level.

While it has been proposed that relief, in the form of some program that will provide applicants with help paying their water bills is in the works, we suspect that such a program will not alleviate the burden on the poorest among us.

Given that there has been no recent opportunity for citizen input on the rate increases, we call upon SAWS to have a series of public hearings similar to those held in 2012 to inform the SAWS Board and San Antonio City Council prior to voting on these rate increases. We also recommend that this committee and the SAWS Board refer to the comments of citizens made at the public meetings when SAWS 50 year water plan was discussed in 2012.

Since SAWS fulfils the dual role as an agency of the City of San Antonio supplying water and as the agency delegated by the City to protect the Edwards Aquifer, we suggest that you hear what the citizens of San Antonio have to say about raising their water rates to secure supplies that encourage an explosion of future development within the Edwards Aquifer watershed.

Sincerely,



Annalisa Peace
Executive Director