

# San Antonio councilman reaches out to local landowners about Vista Ridge project

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Special to the Herald

In response to a request by Burleson County Ranchers Gabbo Goetsch and Andy Hovorak last week, San Antonio City Councilman Ron Nirenberg asked his Director of Communications, Maria Cesar, to meet with concerned Burleson and Milam County landowners in Caldwell last Sunday.

Cesar said that Nirenberg asked her to meet with owners of land above the source aquifers for the Vista Ridge Project because of his belief that San Antonio has to exhibit “regional responsibility” – in other words, be good neighbors.

## NEWS

### ANALYSIS

The meeting was attended by about 100 well-informed and concerned landowners and almost all had something to say against the Vista Ridge Project. The meeting lasted for about three hours.

A principal discussion point revolved around groundwater lease agreements which were also the main focus of the talks delivered by Goetsch and Hovorak at last week’s rally and city council meeting in San Antonio.

The consensus of those attending the meeting was that many of the Vista Ridge

(which was not always true).

Another serious problem discussed at length was that no one has determined if the groundwater leases claimed by the Vista Ridge partners (Blue Water Systems and Abengoa) are legitimate or even exist today since the leases were presented to the groundwater district before 2008. Another important aspect of the groundwater leases which has never been documented is if they are contiguous as required by the groundwater district’s rules.

Hovorak, a former groundwater district director, said that Blue Water Systems just delivered the memoranda of leases in large volumes and no one

how much SAWS and the Vista Ridge partners are willing to spend to defend the leases. He concluded that if everything is legal, the project will probably be a “go.” But the problems he saw are the legal questions centering on the leases and the expected lawsuits about pumping limits.

Another topic of the meeting was the Post Oak Savannah Groundwater District and how it is protecting neither our groundwater nor the property rights of 90 percent of the citizens who have not and/or do not want to lease their groundwater rights to water marketers.

During the meeting, Goetsch mentioned that Burleson County Judge