

Vista Ridge Resolution Coalition

September 12, 2019

To Mayor Ron Nirenberg and Members of the San Antonio City Council:

The undersigned organizations jointly urge you to pass the Vista Ridge Resolution delivered to you at Citizens to be Heard in March 2019.

Our disparate organizations are united in our concerns about the Vista Ridge Water Pipeline project and its risks to, and impacts on, SAWS ratepayers, their water supply, and the water supply of those who rely on the aquifers in Bureson, Milam, Lee, and Bastrop counties aka the "Source Communities."

We are not urging abandonment of Vista Ridge, but rather swift action to gain appropriate oversight of the project, which is slated to begin pumping in less than a year.

That said, we urge you to forge a new policy direction that does not prioritize new development above all other community interests. The Vista Ridge project is symptomatic of policies that have already led to deepening economic segregation and rising taxes and fees in San Antonio, as well as threats to the water resources for current and future generations. These policies continue to lead to greater gentrification, dislocation, evictions, indebtedness, & concentrated poverty as a result of an aggressive metroplex agenda.

The enclosed paper discusses the following issues in more detail:

1. Past City Councils have allowed SAWS to make contract amendments that put ratepayers and the City at risk. A legal memorandum flagging significant issues was shared two years ago with Mayor Nirenberg, but no apparent action was taken.
2. There is credible evidence that this project is likely to damage the source aquifer, harming multiple communities' future. The damage to the aquifer also poses threats for SAWS ratepayers who are going to be relying on this water resource.
3. The financials of Vista Ridge require public clarification, and may require action to address possible illegal use of public funds.
4. Contrary to what SAWS ratepayers have been repeatedly told, the rates for Vista Ridge have not been "locked in."
5. Past City Councils have failed to exercise appropriate policy oversight over SAWS, improperly allowing SAWS to:
 - Develop and implement policies that impact the city and the region, independent of the City Council.
 - Independently lobby the state legislature without explicit approval from the City Council. We know of no other public water utility that operates in this manner.
 - Continue serious transparency transgressions and misrepresentations.
 - Operate with SAWS Trustees whose terms had expired, including allowing them to vote on important policy and budgetary issues, in contravention of SAWS' governing ordinance.

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Letter to Mayor Nirenberg and San Antonio City Council

As set out in the enclosed paper, we urge you to act for the greater good of both San Antonio residents and all central Texans.

Our organizations stand ready to provide support and expert resources to you in order to address probable risks and impacts looming on the horizon.

Respectfully,

Coalition Organizational Members (in alphabetical order)

Alamo Sierra Club

Bexar County Green Party

Environmental Stewardship

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance

Homeowner-Taxpayer Association of Bexar County

Joshua Initiative

League of Independent Voters of Texas

LULAC Concilio Zapatista 4383

San Antonio Making Bureaucracies Accountable

Simsboro Aquifer Water Defense Fund

To reach the Coalition, please contact Reinette King, 210.241.2683, reinette3@gmail.com.

PS: The full 10 page full paper included is also being delivered via email with hotlinks to the attachments.

Cc: Governor Greg Abbott
Chairman Charles Perry and members of the Senate Ctte. on Water & Rural Affairs
Chairman Lyle Larson and members of the House Committee on Natural Resources
Senator Kirk Watson
Senator Jose Menendez
Senator Pete Flores
Senator Judith Zaffirini
Senator Donna Campbell
State Representative Terry Wilson
State Representative John Cyrier
State Representative Ben Leman
State Representative Erin Zwiener
Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff
Burleson County Judge Keith Schroeder
Milam County Judge Steve Young
Lee County Judge Paul Fischer
Bastrop County Judge Paul Pape
Post Oak Savannah Groundwater Conservation District President Sydney Young
Lost Pines Groundwater Conservation District President Mike Talbot
Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District President Milam Michalec
Gonzales County Underground Water Conservation District General Manager, Greg Sengelmann