

RESOLUTION

2014-01

**RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY
OPPOSITION TO THE EXPORTATION
BY SAN ANTONIO WATER SYSTEM AND ANY OTHER WATER USER
OF GROUNDWATER RESOURCES FROM
THE RIO GRANDE BASIN AND ITS TRIBUTARIES**

WHEREAS, the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority (RGRWA) provides for the water supply planning needs for the six (6) counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Webb, Willacy and Zapata; and,

WHEREAS, the RGRWA coordinates efforts with other planning partners to ensure the water supply for this eight (6) county region; and,

WHEREAS, the RGRWA has placed water supply as a priority for the economic sustainability of this region; and,

WHEREAS, the Southwest Texas Region is arid, semi-desert, country subject to reoccurring droughts that are the norm rather than the exception; and,

WHEREAS, surface water resources in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries are the main source of water supply for the RGRWA and the Rio Grande is now over appropriated and of limited availability to support future growth; and,

WHEREAS, groundwater resources in much of the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries are under pressure to supply existing needs and from drilling activities and production associated with the Eagle Ford Shale Play; and,

WHEREAS, cities and towns throughout the RGRWA and in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries are experiencing extraordinary growth and increasing demands for water that are anticipated to continue into the future; and,

WHEREAS, surface and groundwater supplies in the RGRWA and in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries and associated areas suffer in drought conditions, as recently evidenced by the failure of numerous domestic wells in southern Uvalde County, the drying up of the spring fed Leona River, the near failure of Las Moras Springs in Kinney County, historic low lake levels at Amistad and Falcon Reservoirs, and the continuing decline in elevation of the Carrizo Aquifer in Dimmit and La Salle counties; and,

WHEREAS, as the population of the San Antonio metropolitan area and other growth areas in the State expand, there is increasing interest in capturing ~~large quantities of~~ groundwater from resources relied upon by its rural neighbors; and,

WHEREAS, exportation of groundwater from aquifers within the RGRWA and in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries could potentially decrease or eliminate spring flows, reduce surface flows with possible adverse effects on downstream surface water rights and water supply facilities, and adversely affect groundwater supplies needed for current and future domestic, municipal and agricultural uses within the RGRWA and the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries; and,

WHEREAS, The San Antonio Water System and others are considering transportation of groundwater from the Carrizo Aquifer in Dimmit County and from the Edwards-Trinity Aquifer in Val Verde County; and,

WHEREAS, evidence that our knowledge of groundwater hydrology in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries is lacking is found in an investigation of the Western Edwards-Trinity Aquifer (January 2012 Rev.) by Southwest Research Institute, concluding that Val Verde County is one of the counties in the study having the greatest uncertainty in the water budget assessment; and,

WHEREAS, groundwater levels in the Carrizo Aquifer fell significantly in 2010-2011 with one Carrizo Aquifer well in La Salle County dropping 136 feet, underscoring the need for further studies in Dimmit and La Salle counties to better understand the hydrology of the aquifer; and,

WHEREAS, until the consequences of exporting groundwater from aquifers in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries are better understood, it is prudent to oppose such exportations and any actions designed to facilitate such exportations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority that:

1. **We oppose exportation of groundwater resources from aquifers in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries when such exportation could reasonably be expected to reduce the availability of groundwater and surface water resources that are needed for current and projected domestic, agricultural, municipal, industrial, recreational and other beneficial uses within the RGRWA.**
2. **We encourage more studies to better understand groundwater resources in the RGRWA and in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries, the hydrologic interconnection of groundwater and surface water resources, and the economic, social, and environmental consequences of exporting of groundwater from aquifers in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries.**
3. **In view of all of the above, we specifically oppose the exportation of groundwater from Dimmit and Val Verde Counties, as is being considered by the San Antonio Water System and other water users, until such time as the environmental, social and economic impacts to the RGRWA and the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries are better understood.**
4. **We encourage dialog and cooperation among all parties involved in or potentially affected by groundwater exportations from aquifers in the Rio Grande Basin and its tributaries to help achieve water supply programs that maximize benefits to all and minimize harm done.**

Passed and approved by the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority this 8th day of January, 2014.



Mayor James E. Darling
RGRWA President