

My name is Jeannie Jessup, I live near Bastrop and very close to the proposed well field for the LCRA on the Griffith League Ranch property. I am also the founder of Friends of Bastrop Water, which began as a way to try to protect my home and my community. The goal was only to educate the public about the ongoing and evolving issues of the permit application and how it will impact our local community.

In the Staff Report document for the Sunset Review of the LCRA, it states the “LCRA declined offers to hold informal public meetings to provide information to the concerned local community, missing a chance to address concerns early in the process.” Not only is this true, but they failed to inform the surrounding community, a decades old residential community with over 500 homes, of this issue entirely. Had it not been for the efforts of existing water groups contacting the HOA, the area would likely have not have learned of the issue until the required letters to notify residents of the public hearing of Sept 26 with the groundwater conservation district – at which point, little time would have remained for anyone to protest the permit.

The report also stated that I “... rejected LCRA’s subsequent offers to meet.” While it is true that Bill Lauderbeck, did call and offer to organize a public meeting with my assistance, it was only for a date AFTER the September public hearing. It was also after I had already met with John Hoffman at a meeting facilitated by Rep Cyrier’s, to explain and address my communities concerns and to listen to what they said about the project. They expressed a reason for not wanting meetings with the community was due to not wanting to “provide free discovery.” After the meeting with Rep Cyrier, I never heard from them regarding the issues we had discussed.

In a further effort to again address these issues, in November, I spoke in a public comments of an LCRA meeting, explaining the history of the situation and telling their board specifically what my situation was. After that meeting, Phil Wilson came up and spoke with me, expressing a willingness to meet with me and resolve these issues. I still have not had any meeting with anyone from the LCRA since that conversation.

It is frustrating that the LCRA does not appear to take seriously the needs of the communities that they are working in. Even after my repeated attempts to explain the concerns, after my actions being written into the Sunset Review document – they still have not met with me to resolve the situation.

This is at the heart of a failure of public engagement and public trust. Why should anyone believe that the LCRA will respect their community when even while under scrutiny they fail to consider the needs of the people? At least from the perspective of my community, it is clear that this Goliath has little regard for us Davids of the world... That simply because of their vast resources, they can and will do what they want with few consequences to impede them.

It is my hope that this committee take seriously the LCRA’s failures in my community and work to ensure that reforms occur so that other areas don’t have to go through what we have in the future.