

Written testimony for submission to the Sunset Advisory Commission regarding SRBA Review
Steve Mayo, City of Texarkana, Texas Appointed Liaison for Regional Water Issues

My name is Steve Mayo and in 2015 I was appointed by the City of Texarkana, Texas to serve as their Liaison on Regional Water Issues. I was selected for this position due in large part to my previous experience with water issues during my tenure as Mayor of the City of Texarkana, Texas.

In 2015, the City of Texarkana, Texas and its regional member city partners were faced with a host of water related issues including storage fee costs associated with the implementation of the 1968 contract for water in Wright Patman Lake.

During this period, the Sulphur River Basin Authority (SRBA) issued a press release offering to help the City of Texarkana, Texas on these issues.

However, when the City of Texarkana, Texas and Riverbend Water Resources District reached out to SRBA and asked for their support by recognizing Texarkana, Texas and Riverbend Water Resources District remain as the water rights holder for all current and future water that may be made available from Wright Patman Lake, we were ignored for months. We eventually received a letter that largely side-stepped our request.

SRBA's handling of this issue and their total lack of regard for historic water rights holders is a clear example of why the local stakeholders have no trust in SRBA. Even though the city of Texarkana, Texas is the largest, most historic water rights holder in the basin, SRBA has only had what can best be described as a few "token" communications at the staff level with city staff about anything related to the basin wide study.

After watching years of dysfunction from the SRBA, it is clear that legislative structural changes need to be made. I support the staff recommendations in the initial Sunset Report including sweeping the board of older members and allowing Governor Abbott the opportunity to appoint the Chairman if he so desires. We would also welcome some additional legislative accountability measures that help ensure that SRBA considers and protects the interests of the local stakeholders in the basin moving forward.

We are pleased with some of changes we have seen in the last 30 days from SRBA and hope that further reforms will help put SRBA the right path if it going to continue to exist and play a role in water planning for Texas.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and I look forward to working with you in the future.