

Sunset Review of SRBA

Final written testimony for Linda Price, Region D Chairperson

My name is Linda Price and I currently serve as Chairman of the Region D Board. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today regarding my concerns about the Sulphur River Basin Authority (SRBA).

The Sunset staff did an excellent job in preparing the initial report on the SRBA and I support their recommended changes.

As Chairman of Region D, my greatest frustrations with the SRBA is their lack of willingness to provide information, their complete lack of attention to addressing the health and welfare of the basin on issues such as sedimentation and water quality and their unwillingness to act in good faith with and in support of their local stakeholders. It is important to understand that SRBA was only created in 1985. Most of the local water rights holders and communities in the Sulphur Basin existed long before SRBA was even created.

SRBA's dysfunction has negatively impacted the regional water planning process in Region D, thereby creating problems in the State Water Planning Process.

SRBA has a long history of ignoring the local needs and concerns of the stakeholders in their basin. Recent examples of this practice include:

In 2015, SRBA sought Wholesale Water Provider Status from Region C and not from Region D, with no discussion or consultation with local water rights holders and/or stake holders about their intentions to seek future water rights.

SRBA's consultants and engineers provide routine updates to the Region C Planning Group and have never once provided Region D Planning Group with an update presentation on the basin water studies being conducted in our own basin.

September 15, 2015 I attended a meeting held by the Sulphur River Basin Authority (SRBA) in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. At this meeting, the SRBA Board discussed the release to third parties of reports received by the Board of Directors of SRBA (see Agenda Item 6). Specifically, discussion on this item addressed the Agricultural and Timber Impacts Study that was cited in Region C's Brief submitted to the TWDB in the mediation between Region C and Region D. This study had not been made available to Region D or the public at large prior to its release to Region C and the TWDB. During the discussion at the SRBA meeting Becky Griffith, staff with Freese & Nichols, admitted responsibility of the study's selective release.

On October 5, 2015, Region C & D mediated a settlement related to the interregional conflict over the proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir. Region D mediated in good faith and made real sacrifices to try and resolve this matter constructively. After the mediation was complete, Region D was made aware of a memo that had been provided to SRBA dated June 4, 2015 that clearly contradicts the terms that had been agreed to in the mediation process. SRBA and their engineers had this information prior to the Region C & D mediation process but failed to make it available for consideration.

I ask that the Sunset Commission implement the recommendations contained in the Sunset Report and also consider the following additional steps:

- If they are going to continue to exist, provide SRBA with state funding for base operations so they can act as an independent entity
- Provide additional protection for the local stakeholders by adding a requirement the SRBA obtain 2/3 approval from the Region D Water Planning Group prior to serving as a local sponsor on a water supply project that will be primarily used to meet water supply needs outside of our basin.

These additional reforms would help foster a level of trust by the locals in SRBA moving forward and require them to have meaningful dialogue and relationships with their local stakeholders, rather than bypass them in order to benefit only those needs outside of our basin

Thank you for your consideration.