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Date: 9/24/2006 9:25:12 PM
Subject: Public comments on TWDB draft 2007

Bill Roberts

25 Sept 2006

Texas Water Development Board

Sir,

In response to the Sept. 20, 2006 newspaper article Valley Morning Star by Melissa McEver, regarding your request for public comment on the TWDB draft 2007, I offer the following:

a. In the summary of the draft (from the Internet site www.twdb.tx.us [chapter 2.pdf] Summary of Rio Grande (M) region Page 85 Figure M.1) I don't understand what is the meaning of the "Yellow" coloring of the counties: Western Half of Cameron & Willacy, all of Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Eastern parts of Starr, and the SE corner of Webb; which are labeled Gulf Coast, my comments:

1. Cameron County's Eastern half borders the Gulf of Mexico, isn't that Gulf Coast too?

2. Does the Yellow coloring indicate only that part of the counties containing irrigation water?

b. Since you asked for comments on the drafted paper as written, in my opinion, it would be easier to read the (M) Region Summary, if the Tables M 1, 2 etc... came first; followed by the Figures 1, 2 etc... As they are now, the reader must skip around, back & forth, and eke them out.

c. In 2001 I attended one of the San Benito Water District 2's meetings, I have attended only a few meetings. I was trying to understand what SBWD2 considered water conservation. At the time it appeared SBWD2 practiced turning lateral canals on and off, to be a method of conserving water. I contacted Dr. Paul D. Colaizzi, Texas A&M Assistant Professor and Extension Agricultural Engineering Specialist <http://agnews.tamu.edu/dailynews/stories/AGEN/Jun0701a.htm> (As is was reported in a 2001 news story that he was doing studies on Rio Grande Valley water conservation methods.) Dr. Colaizzi responded "that it was no secret that robust reliable methods for accounting for water in this area leaves a lot to be desired". He said we are faced with the age old problem of how do we measure all that water and then how do we manage all that information in a database. He singled out reliable metering, continued verification and training of districts on installation, customization and use of Data Base Systems, as expensive, but necessary. My comments:

1. Does this draft contain any provisions for metering (not arbitrary metering using unreliable methods or equipment)? Were any of Dr. Colaizzi's recommendations incorporated into this draft plan? Isn't water conservation more then just acquiring additional water rights (SBWD2 was selling off some of their's in 2001)? What parts of this plan will conserve water? How can districts evaluate how much water has been conserved without better methods of measuring?

2. Does this draft include provisions for an Texas A&M Geographic Information System (GIS) based management system for districts, like the <http://dms.tamu.edu/>=20 District Management System

(DMS) ?

d. The one impression I was left with, after attending SBWD2's meetings in 2001 & 2004, is that this district relies heavily on private contractors to do most of their engineering. Private contractors have a vested interest in doing engineering and I only hope that some provisions have been made to over see this process, above the district level; especially when, such large sums of money are proposed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the TWDB draft 2007.

Sincerely Ed Norment

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