

RECEIVED WATER RESOURCES

JUN 26 2023

KS DEPT AGRICULTURE

Public Comment for the Hays/Russell Water Transfer Application, OAH No. 23AG0023AG.

My name is Reed Strate and I am a fourth generation farmer in Edwards county. Our farm does neighbor the R9 ranch, so it does have great concern for our operation as to the outcome the panel decides to do. I am not opposed to the city of Hays/Russell for taking water and using it for municipal use, it is in their right to do so. The only concern I have and every farmer in our area would agree is the quantity they are asking for. I certainly do not believe that a quota of 4,800-acre feet on a rolling ten-year average would be sustainable for our aquifer and will pose the threat for impairment to surrounding farmers. You must understand that an irrigation does have some recharge to the aquifer while pumping and whatever rainfall is received, we shut down our systems in order to preserve our aquifer. During the winter is when we benefit the most for recharge to our aquifer due to us not pumping and no surface vegetation is growing. There will be zero recharge on the R9 ranch due to the municipal pumps running year-round resulting in a catastrophic drop in the aquifer and poses a huge threat to water sources downstream. Also, a very serious and real concern I must present to the panel is the precedent you are creating. Since the water transfer act is the first of its kind, I know this whole process is new to everyone and there is no right/wrong way to handle this. I just want to make it clear how the panel votes will set the stage for future water transfers and other conversions of agricultural water rights to municipal uses. So please take this into consideration and hear both sides, because when you make your final decision and get it wrong you make the state, and everybody involved look very poor. You have got to get this right that way it is right for both parties and focuses the conservation for our states aquifer that way everyone can have a sustainable resource for years to come. With water being a scarce resource in the future think what example the panel can be making for neighboring cities and states and knowing you handled this properly and that we set an example as leaders in water conservation. Finally, I ask that you please hear both sides and take every detail into consideration because many communities, businesses and families will be deeply affected by your decision.

Thank you!

Reed Strate

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