

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Natural Resources
For HB 4444

Compiled on: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 2:35 PM

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Hearing Date: March 28, 2023 8:00 AM

Judith McGeary

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance and self (nonprofit executive director, attorney, and farmer)

Cameron, TX

The Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance supports HB 4444. This bill makes modest, yet still important, changes to the current law governing waste and conservation. Given that water is a limited resource vital for all life and economic activity, requiring the use of "reasonably efficient conservation practices" should be self-obvious. Similarly, those seeking to pump groundwater should certainly be required to use reasonable diligence in deciding how much to use to avoid waste.

Carlos Rubinstein

Self and on behalf of Andrew Sansom, Belding Farms and Cockrell Investment Partners
Austin, TX

Comments in Support of HB 4444

By

Carlos Rubinstein and Andrew Sansom, on behalf of Belding Farms and Cockrell Investment Partners
March 28, 2023

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carlos Rubinstein. I previously served as TCEQ Commissioner and Chairman of the TWDB. These comments are submitted on behalf of myself and Mr. Andrew Sansom, former Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Together we assist Belding Farms and Cockrell Investment Partners on sustainable groundwater management concerns. I am submitting our comments FOR HB 4444 by Chairman King.

Belding Farms, owned by Cockrell Investment Partners, participated in various hearings during the interim session where groundwater concerns, including water availability model and desired future conditions (DFC) deficiencies were discussed.

During the interim hearings we also heard of the outdated and ambiguous definition of waste as it relates to groundwater. Clearly, the definition of waste has regulatory implications. Eliminating wasteful use of groundwater helps reduce consumptive uses, while preserving and conserving groundwater supply.

We welcome Chairman King's HB 4444 and effort to update and better define wasteful use of groundwater and call for conservation. We also applaud HB 4444's call for consideration of reasonableness by the TCEQ in permitting bend and banks transport of discharged groundwater for downstream use. We hope this leads to more sustainable conjunctive use of surface and groundwater supplies.

For all the reasons stated, we respectfully submit these comments on behalf of Belding Farms and Cockrell Investment Partners in support of HB 4444.

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March 21, 2023
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