



March 9, 2016

**PRACTICAL WATER
MANAGEMENT FOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Ryan Shay
Federal Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC

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Mailed via the USPS

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Mission:

Community's Advocacy Group
that researches, understands,
educates, influences and
champions transparent,
coordinated decision making of
all who share responsibility for
the robust and healthy economic
development and growth of the
Greater Lake Conroe Region and
all of Montgomery County, TX.

Re: April 7 Hearing: "Oversight of the U.S. Geological Survey"

Dear Mr. Shay:

Please treat the contents of this letter as input to the hearing referenced above. Since its inception in 200, LCCN has been engaged in USGS affairs as they relate to water resource management in Montgomery County, TX. Details regarding LCCN are available on our website: <http://LakeConroeCN.com>. I draw your attention particularly to a current set of presentations available on the home page for download delivered March of this year to each of the three major public agencies involved in the management of the county's water resources.

LOCAL USGS -- CRITICAL IMPACTS

USGS Work Product Misused

USGS has been held up publicly in the region as THE PRIMARY SOURCE of "best available science" since at least the year 2000. They have been cited as the grounds for EACH OF THE CRITICAL FACTORS that have framed and driven Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District's creation of groundwater rules and regulations in Montgomery County. These rules have rolled back and frozen groundwater production to 2009 levels in the midst of a county that is doubling in population.

Unwarranted groundwater rules have forced over a billion dollars in expenditures so far (much more yet to come) in an attempt to make up for lost groundwater use by consuming the county's only reservoir for drinking



water. That reservoir cannot deliver the volumes of water now demanded of it and the negative environmental, health and economic impacts of this will severely impact Montgomery County's growth in the coming years.

Lack of USGS Independent Explanation and Defense of its Work

Despite the enormous impact of its work, USGS has NEVER engaged in ANY public discussion let alone open dialog with the community of its opinions regarding its work and interpretations of that work by policy, rule making and operational agencies in the region. Numerous experts in the community believe strongly that such public discourse by USGS would expose and eliminate the systematic and damaging misuse of USGS work and remove the underpinnings for current public agency policy, rules and operations that are diverting Montgomery county water resources and damaging both owners and consumers of those resources.

Duplicity of Local USGS?

USGS has received major funding from the very agencies in the region that are speaking entirely for USGS in the application of its work product. Given the dramatic misuse of that work product and the systematic lack of public engagement by USGS, one is left to conclude that USGS is violating the first critical rule of sound scientific investigation – clear independence of such investigation, both real and perceived by the public that is affected by their work. Persistent public engagement/dialog is one clear way to exert their independence. Their perceived lack of independence should be of grave concern to the senior management of USGS whose reputation is critical to the agency's work throughout the country, not just here.

CRITICAL COMMUNITY NEED FOR USGS

Lest one be tempted to conclude simply that USGS should not be engaged in such work here, rest assured that their withdrawal would only fuel the rush to private contractors who will be totally beholden to the local sponsors of their work. No, **the government's scientific capabilities CANNOT abandon their role HERE as one critical source of independence on the science surrounding water resources and their management.** Rather that independence needs to be embraced at the highest levels of USGS management and corrective action needs to be imposed on the local branches of USGS who have systematically failed to exert their critical independence for at least 20 years now in their analysis of the entire Gulf Coast Aquifer system that underlies the region. And they must immediately begin making themselves available to the public and engaging aggressively in discussions regarding individual components of that system like the Jasper and the Catahoula aquifers that provide the bulk of groundwater for Montgomery County and its adjoining neighbors to the north. USGS's systematic lack of an independent presence in the public arena is leading to absolute corruption of the character and management of water resources in these counties.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael J. Massey, Treasurer