

Adopt all water-flow protections

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Fish, shrimp, oysters, wildlife, people and businesses all need water. Striking the right balance in providing that water is not easy.

Recently, our region saw an unprecedented example of diverse stakeholders, the [Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program](#), achieve a balance for managing the Edwards Aquifer. Another group, on which we serve, has reached agreement on protecting the water flowing in our rivers, bays and estuaries.

Scientists and stakeholders have been working since 2009 to develop environmental flow recommendations for the Guadalupe, San Antonio, Mission and Aransas river basins. The stakeholders presented a report with flow standards that provide enough water to support fish and wildlife while allowing reasonable water-supply development. We offered innovative approaches that provide future certainty for new water-supply projects and protection of our rivers and bays.

The recommendations represent a hard-won compromise among various interests that can help us move beyond long-standing quagmires. Most stakeholder recommendations were adopted unanimously, although a few key ones were adopted by a 19-3 supermajority vote. Now, these stakeholders and the constituents they represent need the [Texas Commission on Environmental Quality](#), or TCEQ, to adopt rules establishing environmental flow standards consistent with those recommendations.

We need adequate river flow to preserve water quality, support fish, wildlife and recreational fishing opportunities and maintain commercial fisheries, while also supporting businesses, cities and agriculture.

In moving from stakeholder recommendations to proposed rule language, TCEQ staff did not include major aspects of the recommended protections. Many stakeholder-recommended protections for the San Antonio River and Mission River basins remain, but few protections for the Guadalupe River were incorporated into the rules.

Today, TCEQ commissioners will decide the content of rules proposed for formal public comment and then adoption. We urge commissioners to honor the full stakeholder recommendations and send a message acknowledging our collective obligation to provide water supplies and protect rivers and bays — and the jobs they support — for future generations of Texans.

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<http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/commentary/article/Another-View-To-protect-water-adopt-all-3438616.php#ixzz1qPuuRgyv>

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