

Not Pickens' Water

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UNDERGROUND WATER IN the Ogallala Aquifer does not belong to T. Boone Pickens or to any other one person. It belongs to everyone.

We find the notion of someone drilling wells in a piece of land in West Texas and systematically draining water from the aquifer to sell to other parts of the state — or to other states — to be offensive and unacceptable. That water is vitally needed in West Texas by cities and agriculture producers, and in West Texas it should stay.

A requirement of Mr. Pickens that he leave at least 50 percent of the aquifer's volume does not impress us. We have a mental picture of every possible drop being siphoned out to further line a rich man's pockets.

Water is life for any region. It is particularly so for an arid region and an agriculturally based region — and West Texas is both. Water represents the very future of West Texas. It should remain under West Texas soil until it is needed locally.

We have never had to ration water in Lubbock because we have taken care of our precious resource. Lubbock has had the benefits of good planning and measured growth to serve our water needs.

In the 1950s, far-thinking leaders in Lubbock secured rights to water from Lake Meredith that is our primary water source today. Lake Alan Henry was developed as a water source 30 years before Lubbock will need to use its water.

Have Dallas and San Antonio — and other cities where Mr. Pickens has discussed peddling water — labored far ahead on behalf of their people to develop water sources?

We encourage the Texas Legislature to take steps to ensure fair water use by every part of the state. Water is life for a region, and it strikes us as unfair for one region to be using another region's water.