

Bandera County
Crockett County
Edwards County
Kimble County
Kerr County
Llano County



Mason County
Medina County
Menard County
Real County
Schleicher County
Sutton County

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ANDREW S. MURR

District 53

October 26, 2015

Mr. Henning Eilert-Olsen, President
Save Medina Lake Committee
472 Sidney Shores
Lakehills, Texas 78063

Mr. Eilert-Olsen:

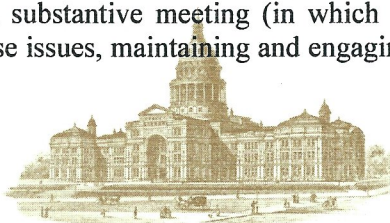
Thank you again taking time out of your busy schedule, gathering a number of the leaders of the Save Medina Lake (SML) Committee together, and hosting a lengthy and detail-oriented meeting in your home a few weeks ago. Additionally, the helicopter tour you organized with pilot Heath Voss provided a very unique and beneficial perspective of the topography and layout of Medina Lake, Diversion Lake, the Medina River and portions of the canal system operated by Bexar-Medina-Atascosa Counties Water Control and Improvement District No. 1 (BMA). Please also express my appreciation to Jody Daniel and Michelle Reichle, and others, for their serious and sincere input during our lengthy (and continuing) discussions.

During your comprehensive presentation, you and the SML Committee provided a number of items that you believe are important to the management of Medina Lake (and subsequently Diversion Lake) by BMA. In summary, I understand them to be as follows:

- (1) the SML Committee calls for greater transparency in the operations of BMA, including for example, easy access to public data (rather than being required to submit public information requests pursuant the Texas Public Information Act) about BMA board meetings, collected data measuring water flow and amounts of released or diverted water, and current lake levels;
- (2) the SML Committee advocates for and seeks assistance with either the dissemination of data and/or the installation/re-installation of a meter near Diversion Lake Dam to measure the lake level of Diversion Lake; and
- (3) the SML Committee desires for BMA, in conducting its *primary purpose* of providing water to farmers in its district, to adopt practices and strategic goals for one or more *secondary purposes*, including science-based management of both Medina Lake and Diversion Lake levels to best ensure that the lake system remains as full as possible (so long as the primary purpose is satisfied).

Following our lengthy and substantive meeting (in which myself and my staff attended), my office has continued to research these issues, maintaining and engaging in ongoing dialogue with you and

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other SML Committee members, contacting BMA staff and officials and learning about their operations and goals, and visiting with various state agencies.

My staff and I remain engaged and have had the opportunity to meet with BMA staff and tour their facilities. I have been provided substantial information about BMA's ongoing efforts to improve its efficiencies regarding conservation and reducing water loss, including millions of dollars in construction of closed (piped) irrigation systems. I have also visited with BMA officials about taking steps to increase the district's accessibility to and transparency of information. As a former county official, I understand and appreciate the benefits of even a simple website containing basic information, access to meeting agenda notices, and other relevant information. My dialogue with BMA leaders is ongoing, just as it is with you and SML Committee members.

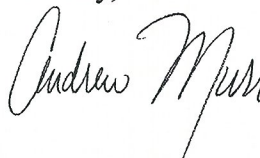
I am keenly aware of the current disharmony and lack of consistent dialogue between lake area stakeholders and BMA. I also empathize with individuals on both sides whose livelihoods are tethered to water, be it farmers, their employees and the businesses that serve them, on the one side, or lakeside property owners, homebuilders, realtors, lake recreational businesses, and the commercial activity surrounding Lake Medina, on the other side. I'd like to note that some posts to the SML Committee's social media site have spent time venting and attacking others, including myself. While I monitor your social media, few benefits can be reaped by my engaging in responses to these attacks. I'd rather spend time reading background data, engaging with leaders and interested parties on both sides, asking as many questions as possible, and suggesting ideas. To forge solutions, I believe that we all must challenge ourselves to put our best foot forward. I hope that you and the SML Committee encourage others to do the same.

We also discussed the fact that the Texas Legislature is in session for only 140 days every two years and will not convene again until January 2017. While this means that there is no immediate "legislative fix," it also provides ample time to work on solutions to the issues you outlined. I am optimistic that our dedication to our neighbors, our communities and common good of all Texans will help us find workable resolutions for all.

I remain engaged, motivated and interested in working with you (and the SML Committee) and BMA to ensure that water in and from Medina Lake is managed to most effectively and efficiently accomplish the goal of providing farmers in the district with water while also conserving a safe supply of lake water for interested parties who live and work around it. We will continue our ongoing dialogue and sharing of information.

Thank you, again, for hosting our substantive meeting. I will be visiting with you again, soon.

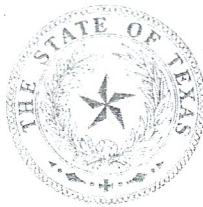
Sincerely,



State Representative
Texas House District 53

cc: Mr. Ed Berger, BMA General Manager
Mr. Tommy Fey, BMA Board President
Mr. Will Carter, BMA Board Secretary/Treasurer

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ANDREW S. MURR

District 53

October 26, 2015

Mr. Ed Berger, General Manager
Bexar-Medina-Atascosa Counties Water Control and Improvement District No. 1
226 Highway 132
Natalia, Texas 78059

Mr. Berger:

Thank you again for taking time out of your day to meet with me and my staff a few weeks ago. We also appreciated the time and attention to detail that Field Manager Brian Sullivan gave us. I personally found it very beneficial to tour much of the infrastructure that BMA is responsible for constructing and maintaining in its delivery of water to farmers in the district. Additionally, the amount of background information you have shared on the operations of the district, its budget and recent (and ongoing) improvements and upgrades was substantial. Please relay to your board of directors that I am very supportive of BMA's ongoing efforts to increase water conservation and decrease water system loss.

You are also aware that I met with members of the Save Medina Lake (SML) Committee recently and discussed their concerns. As stakeholders around Medina Lake, many of these folks own property and/or have businesses tied to the lake. When lake levels plummet, many of their businesses suffer and property values decline.

All members of the SML Committee that I met with assured me that they fully understand that the primary purpose of the BMA is to deliver water to farmers in the district. Their concerns relate more to the operations of BMA in relation to Medina Lake and Diversion Lake. To recapitulate,

- (1) the SML Committee calls for greater transparency in the operations of BMA, including for example, easy access to public data about BMA board meetings, collected data measuring water flow and amounts of released or diverted water, and current lake levels;
- (2) the SML Committee advocates for and seeks assistance with either the dissemination of data and/or the installation/re-installation of a meter near Diversion Lake Dam to measure the lake level of Diversion Lake; and
- (3) the SML Committee desires for BMA, in conducting its *primary purpose* of providing water to farmers in its district, to adopt practices and strategic goals for one or more *secondary purposes*, including science-based management of both Medina Lake and Diversion Lake levels to best ensure that the lake system remains as full as possible (so long as the primary purpose is satisfied).

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This summary is mine and constitutes the most important points made to me by members of the SML Committee.

I am aware of the current disharmony and lack of consistent dialogue between lake area stakeholders and BMA. With that in mind, I want to bridge that disconnect and help facilitate a discussion of these and similar subjects. Knowing how important water is to all stakeholders in this discussion, interaction and exchange of information is imperative.

We have visited numerous times and will continue to meet and talk on a regular basis. I will continue to ask many questions and learn as much as possible about BMA, Medina Lake, Diversion Lake, and the irrigation system that delivers water to folks who grow our food and fiber. My staff and I also remain in constant contact with leaders on the SML Committee and will continue to visit with them regularly as well.

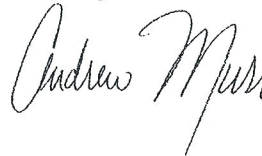
At your earliest convenience, please advise me on the three subjects delineated above. I realize that we have likely touched upon one or more of these general topics during our conversations, but I am happy for you to repeat any such information. I am confident that you will provide me with positive news, and I look forward to relaying that back to members of the SML Committee.

On a side note, members of the SML Committee inquired about legislative action regarding these topics. As you are likely aware, the Texas Legislature is in session for only 140 days every two years and will not convene again until January 2017. While this means that there is no immediate "legislative fix" for any party, it also provides ample time to engage in comprehensive discussions and work on solutions to the above-outlined issues. I am optimistic that our dedication to our neighbors, our communities and common good of all Texans will help us find workable resolutions for all.

I remain engaged, motivated and interested in working with interested parties to ensure that water in and from Medina Lake is managed to most effectively and efficiently accomplish the goal of providing farmers in the district with water while also conserving a safe supply of lake water for interested parties who live and work around it. We will continue our ongoing dialogue and sharing of information.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. Again, please express my appreciation to Mr. Sullivan, and all of your staff, for all the hard work you do.

Sincerely,



State Representative
Texas House District 53

cc: Mr. Henning Eilert-Olsen, President, Save Medina Lake Committee
Mr. Tommy Fey, BMA Board President
Mr. Will Carter, BMA Board Secretary/Treasurer