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## Proceed with caution on desalination

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(Photo: Getty Images)

In response to the article regarding the increase in water supplies for industrial use in the Corpus Christi area ("City looking to boost water supply" Caller 7/26/2018):

This is not the first time or probably the last that "desal" has been brought up as a source for additional water supply in the Coastal Bend area. Caution should be exercised because there are numerous problems associated with this type of water production.

Not only are there the high costs of expendable materials (semi-permeable membranes, costs of chemicals used to treat the raw water at different stages of purification, and, perhaps most important of all, the proper disposal of waste products, including brine, associated with desalination).

Another concern is the need for evaporation ponds (large land areas to handle the volume of brine produced daily), and the amount of time it takes to evaporate all the water to reduce it to a dry, landfill-compliant product.

**More:** [With industry's growth in Corpus Christi, city looks to increase its water supply \(/story/news/local/2018/07/25/industrial-growth-means-corpus-christi-water-supply-must-increased/827414002/\)](#)

**More:** [Tide of opposition forms to Port of Corpus Christi's desalination plans \(/story/news/local/2018/07/20/tide-opposition-forms-port-corpus-christi-desalination-plans/806877002/\)](#)

**More:** [This is what's right about Port Aransas raising a stink about desalination \(/story/opinion/2018/07/24/port-corpus-christi-could-have-been-more-up-front-desalination/822511002/\)](#)

"Deep well injection" of the brine, is another option. But the problem is that almost all subterranean rock formations in the Coastal Bend area are either slate, basalt, or some other type of sedimentary rock. High-pressure injection can fracture the bedrock, causing permanent contamination of valuable groundwater sources that so many farmers and ranchers have as their sole source of potable water.

Let us not forget the same potential problems resulting from the fracking of subterranean formations for the production of natural gas, with the pollution being just as permanent, but much more toxic. Do you wonder why no fracking company thus far has ever disclosed what is in its fracking fluids, although there are people associated with it who say it contains benzene, a known carcinogen, as well as who knows what additional toxins? Remember, once groundwater is contaminated, there is no known way to reverse the toxicity.

The "powers that be" need to slow down development — especially industrial development that would already strain our existing, finite sources of potable water — and use treated wastewater effluent in as many industrial applications as possible, further lessening the already high demands on our fresh water sources.

Finally, and most important, we need to control the need to bring in as much industry as possible, because just as it was with Voestalpine, the noise problems and airborne particulate contamination of the surrounding areas near the plant site were apparently either not addressed, or were kept out of the public knowledge until everything was built and in operation, and public discourse over these problems seemed to fall on deaf ears.

Let's use common sense and our investigative capacity to vet ANY enterprise, whether industrial, recreational, or otherwise, to make sure it is a good fit for our Sparkling City by the Sea and the surrounding areas. We still have a world class city and area, and to keep that first and foremost for the next decade or two is really the only thing that makes sense. Let's don't make decisions for the few, at the expense of the many. Think about it.

*John Arguell is a former analytical laboratory technician with the city of Corpus Christi Water Utilities Laboratory. He retired in 2003.*

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