

PECOS COUNTY WATER CONTROL AND IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT No. 1

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April 7, 2025

Chairwoman Brooke T. Paup  
Commissioner Bobby Janecka  
Commissioner Catarina R. Gonzales  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 13087  
Austin Texas 78711-3087

Re: TCEQ Docket 2025-0373-MIS (Response to Restated Petition for Inquiry filed by Cockrell Investment Partners, L.P. against Middle Pecos Groundwater Conservation District)

Dear Commissioners,

Our District, the Pecos County Water Control Improvement District No. 1, is the second-largest retail water utility in Pecos County. We rely solely on groundwater to supply public water to our customers, and know just how important it is to manage our groundwater resources properly. We find it extremely concerning that Cockrell Investment Partners filed a Restated Petition for Inquiry.

Our District opposes Cockrell's petition because their claims are simply not true or misrepresent how MPGCD handles its business. It would be wrong to dissolve MPGCD or replace its Board of Directors. It would be deeply troubling if a single landowner like Cockrell Investment Partners convinced TCEQ to order MPGCD to change its rules.

I have lived and worked in the Fort Stockton area my whole life and have been working for the District since 2013, where I became General Manager in 2017. I am personally familiar with the reputation and integrity of most of its Directors—over the years those Directors have included former public servants (Council Members, a 30-year County Commissioner, our County Extension Agent, a City Attorney)—and a professor, and important local businessmen and landowners. They meet every month for several hours and appear to take their business of setting groundwater policies and making decisions on permit

applications very seriously. Their General Manager Ty Edwards is well known for his years of experience in the local well-drilling industry and for over decade with MPGCD. And at Board meetings and hearings they have several credentialed, experienced hydrogeologists who appear to be supporting Mr. Edwards and his Board.

Our District holds multiple groundwater production permits issued by MPGCD. As a result, we stay actively involved in groundwater permitting matters as well as management decisions of its Board. I am regularly in contact with Mr. Edwards, and am responsible for reporting to MPGCD our District's groundwater production. Through years of direct observation and interaction, I have developed a thorough understanding of MPGCD's operations and their rules. Based on this experience, I want to convey to TCEQ that MPGCD has proven itself to be a well-run organization that is dedicated to protecting local groundwater resources.

When I first joined the District, I was aware that we were working with MPGCD, the County, City of Fort Stockton, and several other landowners in a lawsuit against FSH, who wanted to market 50,000 acre feet somewhere outside Pecos County—no one was sure at the time exactly who might buy FSH's water. At about the time I was promoted to General Manager, I recall Midland, San Angelo, and Abilene committing to a deal with FSH, and willing to take a little more than half what FSH wanted to sell. We worked with everyone in that lawsuit to settle with FSH. FSH agreed to serious permit restrictions where they get cut back first if there's a problem with aquifer levels. That made sense for us, and the others. And we trust that MPGCD will enforce those permit terms.

Other than the FSH permit terms that protect our local aquifer, I know about MPGCD's rules. Fortunately we haven't had to see pumping restrictions but we know that the rules allow MPGCD to cut back all pumpers if we have a problem with local aquifer levels. I can keep an eye on those levels, not only with our District's own wells but by calling Mr. Edwards to get a report or looking at his webpage.

I don't know exactly why Cockrell Investment Partners filed its petition and then filed another petition. They seem to feel strongly about protecting their pecan farm's water supply. I honestly believe they shouldn't worry because MPGCD has proven that it is serious about groundwater management.

In closing, MPGCD has a strong track record, it is clear that this petition is unwarranted, and does not serve the best interests of our region. On behalf of

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Pecos County Water Improvement District No. 1, I respectfully request that TCEQ dismiss this petition. Thank you for your time and consideration.

I am filing and serving this statement to meet TCEQ's requirements, and have notarized it so that my statements are sworn statements.

Sincerely,

*Billy Gonzales*

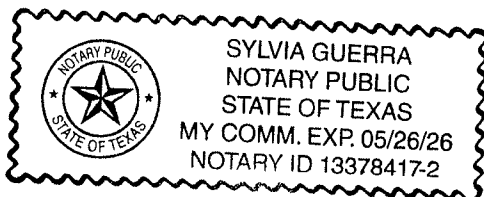
Billy Gonzales  
General Manager

SWORN STATEMENT

STATE OF TEXAS  
PECOS COUNTY

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SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2025, to certify which witness my hand and official seal.



*Sylvia Guerra*

Notary Public in and for the State of Texas

My commission expires: 5/26/26

cc: TCEQ Service List

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TCEQ Docket No. 2025-0373-MIS

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