

G-M WATER BOARD VOTES NO ON SUPPORTING GROUND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The G-M Water Supply Board of Directors, at its September meeting, voted not to support the formation of a Ground Water Conservation District for Sabine County, according to Jerry Pickard, General Manager. Mr. Pickard said that after a report from R. D. Griffin, Board Secretary and after much discussion among the Board Members and their consulting engineer, the Board could find no good reason to support a Ground Water Conservation District.

In his report, Mr. Griffin re-affirmed that currently, there are only six water wells in the entire county producing enough water each day to generate fees for the proposed district. Those wells belong to G-M Water, the City of Pineland, and two private wells. The fees generated by only six or seven wells will never generate enough revenue to fund a Ground Water Conservation District; therefore, a county wide property tax would have to be enacted to cover the expenses of that bureaucracy.

G-M Water Supply's engineers confirmed that only a small fringe portion the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer exists in the extreme northern portion and another area in the northwestern part of the county. The Carrizo-Wilcox is one of the state's big sources of groundwater, but due to its limited existence in Sabine County, residents here rely on surface water from Toledo Bend Lake supplied by the City of Hemphill and G-M Water Supply. The wells in the City of Pineland are supplied by a minor local aquifer.

Joe Kelley, President of G-M Water stated that much misunderstanding and misinformation exists for the need of a Conservation District. First, the idea that a district can prevent a well owner from delivering water anywhere he wishes is incorrect. A water well owner may use his water for any purpose he wishes – commercial or private. The only thing a Conservation District can do is inspect his well and assess fees or in some cases, prevent a land owner from drilling a new well. The second true fact is that aquifers of commercial interest are non-existent in Sabine County, as already stated, the Carrizo-Wilcox has very limited value to our residents. Third and finally, the bottom line is that the formation of a Water Conservation District in Sabine county will result in increased water costs for G-M customers, city customers relying on city owned water wells and each and every property owner in Sabine county for no good reason. Kelley re-emphasized again, that the G-M Board believes a Ground Water Conservation District will place an undue and unwanted property tax burden and water rate increase on all Sabine county residents.

The chance to vote yes or no will be on the November ballot.