

San AntonioExpress-News  
Letters to the Editor: **Water protests not new**  
Your Turn: Protecting the people  
July 25, 2001

Kudos to the Express-News for the prominent coverage of the approval of the Regional L water plan ("Water proposal crosses a bridge: State panel OKs plan to channel some lower Guadalupe flow to S.A.," Thursday).

However, the characterization of efforts to point out the plan's serious environmental implications as "11th-hour" is inaccurate. The National Wildlife Federation has been raising these issues for the better part of a year.

During the hearing last Wednesday, we expressed concern over the proposed diversion of water near the Guadalupe River's mouth, which could harm shrimp, fish and oysters in San Antonio Bay and the people who depend on them.

Bill West of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority was quoted as saying, "We... never heard from the people who raised these issues today."

The National Wildlife Federation commented on these issues in San Antonio at a Sept. 27, 2000, regional planning hearing. In October, we submitted a detailed eight-page letter to the regional planning group on which Mr. West sits. This pointed out both strengths and weaknesses of the draft plan, including potential environmental impacts of the Guadalupe River project.

We never got a substantive response. If Mr. West never heard our earlier comments, then the process is seriously flawed.

San Antonio has serious water issues to address, and we're trying to be an effective participant in the process. While we understand some people may disagree with our perspective, it's not fair to ignore our earlier comments and then claim we waited too long to raise the issues.

Dr. Norman D. Johns, scientist, National Wildlife Federation, Austin