



March 20, 2023

The Honorable Brooks Landgraf, Chair
House Committee on Environmental Regulation
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Re: HB 1505 (TCEQ Sunset Legislation)

Dear Chairman Landgraf:

I am writing on behalf of Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited. GRTU is the largest Trout Unlimited chapter in the United States and we focus much of our efforts on protecting the trout fishery on the Guadalupe River downstream of Canyon Lake. Our membership consists of over 6,000 Texans living all over the state.

As a result, GRTU has participated in proceedings involving water right permits issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. On two occasions, GRTU participated as a party in TCEQ permit hearings.

GRTU has been able to settle its two disagreements with the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority regarding GBRA's applications involving its water rights. GRTU was able to avoid a full contested case hearing by working with GBRA to find mutually acceptable solutions that fit within Texas law. Those agreements – products of the contested case hearing process - provide critical protections for fishing in the Guadalupe River.

TCEQ granted GRTU's requests to participate in those hearings due to GRTU's property interests adjacent to the Guadalupe River. However, GRTU now understands that TCEQ is acting to prevent other fishermen from participating in hearings simply because those fishermen lack property interests.

Fishing is an important interest that Texas should give full protection. Notably, the right to fish is protected in the Texas Constitution's bill of rights as a result of a 2015 constitutional amendment. Recreational fishing, such as that occurring in the Guadalupe River, is an economic engine for some communities. Commercial fishing is an important livelihood for many Texans. In some areas of the state, such as Caddo Lake, there are those that rely upon fishing as their primary food source.

We would ask that the Committee consider this issue, and implement the statutory changes necessary to ensure that the TCEQ provides full protection for fishing rights in the State of Texas.

If I can provide any additional information, I would be pleased to do so.

Sincerely,

William Marshall

William Marshall

President

Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited

CC: The Honorable R.D. "Bobby" Guerra
The Honorable Keith Bell
The Honorable Jay Dean
The Honorable John Kuempel
The Honorable Janie Lopez
The Honorable Thresa "Terry" Meza
The Honorable Penny Morales Shaw
The Honorable Ron Reynolds