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Judith Zaffirini
State Senator, District 21
President Pro Tempore, 1997

Committees
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State Affairs

March 22, 2016

Bill Jones, Commissioner
Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission
100 Congress Avenue, Suite 100
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Commissioner Jones:

Thank you for organizing and mediating the first San Marcos River Task Force meeting on March 7. My constituents and I appreciate your leadership and commitment to addressing the complex challenges that Caldwell, Guadalupe, and Hays counties face as a result of the heavy recreational use of the San Marcos River.

While heartened that the task force considered potential funding sources for additional law enforcement along the river and possible methods for voluntary self-regulation, I hope this discussion will be expanded to include an evaluation of the specific voluntary efforts already undertaken during the most recent tubing season, especially the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Texas State Tubes LLC and RKY Ltd. This MOU was intended to increase outfitter accountability relating to environmental quality, public safety, and communication with property owners, and it provided the outfitters an opportunity to address these important issues without regulatory intervention. Because the outfitters proposed this MOU as an alternative to legislation, it played a critical role last session in the consideration of my Senate Bill 234, relating to the creation and operation of a park and recreation district in counties that share a border on the San Marcos River and to the authority of the district to collect fees and issue bonds.

So that the task force can address its charge to the best of its ability, I urge you to request this MOU and any related agreements from the outfitters and to have them present a reconciliation of the MOU to the workgroup. Auditing the performance of the parties under these agreements would provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of the outfitters' efforts during the 2015 tubing season and would help the task force identify appropriate solutions for the considerable stakeholder concerns and better evaluate whether legislative solutions are needed.

Please feel free to contact me regarding this request or whenever I may be of assistance.

May God bless you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith Zaffirini".

Judith Zaffirini

JZ/kk