

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
GROUND WATER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

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IN RE: APPLICATION OF \* VOLUME I OF III  
SPARTA GROUNDWATER \* DOCKET NO. GWMC 02-0001  
CRITICAL AREA \*  
DESIGNATION \*

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REPORT OF HEARING  
HELD AT  
RUSTON, LOUISIANA  
NOVEMBER 19, 2002

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IN RE: APPLICATION OF \*  
SPARTA GROUNDWATER \* DOCKET NO. GWMC 02-0001  
CRITICAL AREA \*  
DESIGNATION \*

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Report of the hearing of the Ground Water  
Management Commission, State of Louisiana, on November  
19, 2002, in Ruston, Louisiana.

COMMISSION MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Karen Gautreaux, Chairman
- Phil Boudreaux, Department of Natural Resources
- Steve Chustz, DEQ
- Michael Taylor, DED
- John Roussel, Assistant Secretary Wildlife & Fisheries
- Linda Zaunbrecher, Farm Bureau Member
- Dean Lowe, Department of Health and Hospitals

## 1 APPEARANCES:

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3 Ralph Hock, Webster Parish Water Advisory Board

4 Mike Walsworth, State Representative, District 15

5 Tommy Chatham, Jackson Parish Watershed District

6 Todd Culpepper, Jackson Parish Police Jury

7 Gary Carlisle, Sparta Commission Member

8 Jack Beard, Lincoln Parish Police Jury

9 Robert Reynolds, Union County Water Conservation Board

10 Jackie Reppond, Sparta Board, Industry

11 Jim Fannin, Jackson Parish Cattlemen

12 Robert Greer, Jackson Parish Watershed

13 Wade Meade, Department of History, Louisiana Tech

14 Robert Moore, President Jackson Parish Farm Bureau

15 Rick Godley

16 John C. Broussard, International Representative PACE

17 Olevia C. McDonald, Stone Container Corporation

18 Bridger DeVille

19 Charles H. Johnston, Cattlemen

20 Doug Davidson, Farm Bureau

21 Jim Lee

22 Travis Tinsley, Claiborne and Webster Parishes

23 James Michael

24 T. E. Gene Coleman, Claiborne Parish Police Jury

25 Robin Bridges, Webster Water Alliance

26 William Daniel, State Representative, District 68

27 George Jacob, Bienville Parish Police Jury

28 Jane Stephenson, League of Women Voters

29 Bobby E. Price, City of Ruston

30 Sarah Lindblad, GAGE

1 APPEARANCES (cont'd):

2 Patricia Jones, GAGE

3 John Van Bennett, Union Cattlemen Association, Inc.

4 John Hays

5 J. E. Mitcham

6 Cliff Arrington

7 Paul Washington

8 Reggie G. Skains, Mayor Downsville

9 Ed L. Aston

10 John L. Emory

11 Albert G. Hulett, Jackson Parish Watershed District

12 Edward L. Lee, 7122 D'Arbonne Water

13 Bill Jones, Senator, District 35

14 Dennis Woodward

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1 DOCKET NO. GWMC 02-0001

2 CRITICAL AREA DESIGNATION OF THE SPARTA AQUIFER

3 NOVEMBER 19, 2001

4 \* \* \* \* \*

5 COMMISSIONER GAUTREAUX:

6 My name is Karen Gautreaux, Chairman of the  
7 Louisiana Ground Water Management Commission. I'd  
8 like to first ask the other Commissioners who are here  
9 with me today to introduce themselves, then I'll make  
10 some brief remarks. We'll start on Linda's end,  
11 Linda?

12 COMMISSIONER ZAUNBRECHER:

13 I'm Linda Zaunbrecher, I represent Louisiana Farm  
14 Bureau.

15 COMMISSIONER LOWE:

16 I'm Dean Lowe. I represent Department of Health  
17 and Hospitals.

18 COMMISSIONER CHUSTZ:

19 I'm Steve Chustz with the Department of  
20 Environmental Quality.

21 COMMISSIONER BOUDREAUX:

22 I'm Phil Boudreaux with the Department of Natural  
23 Resources.

24 COMMISSIONER ROUSSEL:

25 John Roussel, Assistant Secretary, Department of  
26 Wildlife and Fisheries.

27 COMMISSIONER GAUTREAUX:

28 Thank you. I just want to give you a little  
29 background. This commission was formed after the 2001  
30 Legislative Session by Act 446, which was referred to

1 as the Louisiana Groundwater Management Act. And the  
2 legislation followed after the deliberations and  
3 recommendations of the Governor's advisory task force,  
4 water policy advisory task force, which recommended  
5 both short- and long-term measures for the management  
6 of water in Louisiana so that we could manage it in a  
7 sustainable fashion.

8 The commission has two primary charges, one is a  
9 longer term charge in the development of a statewide  
10 comprehensive management plan, which must be submitted  
11 to our House and State Senate environment committees  
12 by December 31st of this year; and, also, to protect  
13 the sustainability of Louisiana's aquifers, primarily  
14 through the designation of critical groundwater areas,  
15 and managing the groundwater resources within those  
16 areas once they're designated. The commission has  
17 several other responsibilities, it's on the website,  
18 which we'll give you an address to go to if you'd like  
19 to read the actual act, you're very welcome to do so,  
20 and I encourage you to do so.

21 Today we're here because the Sparta Groundwater  
22 Conservation District Commission has submitted an  
23 application for areas within the Sparta aquifer to be  
24 designated as critical groundwater areas, and  
25 according to the application for a critical  
26 groundwater area, by the procedure by which it's  
27 designated, and that was established, the procedure  
28 was established by commission rule, the commission  
29 must hold a public hearing within the area proposed to  
30 be designated as a critical groundwater area. So

1 that's why we're here tonight. You're going to hear  
2 more about the procedural details from staff as we go  
3 on, they'll go into the particulars, but I just wanted  
4 to give you a little overview.

5 Tonight is an extremely important opportunity to  
6 both learn more about what is being proposed in the  
7 actual application, as well as having an opportunity  
8 to offer your questions and comments on the matter, on  
9 the application. And the commission and staff will  
10 incorporate this information presented today, as well  
11 as comments received during the comment period that  
12 will follow, and we'll consider that as we deliberate  
13 on the application itself.

14 Obviously, water is one of our most important  
15 resources, we can't live without it, ecosystems can't  
16 live without it, and our economy is very tied to our  
17 water resources here. Your presence is very, very  
18 important to us, and I'm so pleased to see so many  
19 people here tonight, and it will be important to you  
20 as we move forward with this process and in future  
21 discussions on Louisiana's water resources. I think,  
22 based on attendance tonight, we'll likely receive  
23 quite a bit of information, and we're grateful for  
24 that, so I'll keep my comments very brief by  
25 recognizing some important partners in our efforts to  
26 manage our water resources.

27 The legislation that creates the commission also  
28 creates an advisory task force of 49 members, and  
29 those members represent many interests across the  
30 state including agriculture, business and industry,

1 environmental conservation community, local, federal  
2 government, and universities, to name a few. And the  
3 task force helps us develop overall policy as well as  
4 helping us address specific issues. I'd like to ask  
5 the members that are here tonight to please stand up.  
6 Thank you. These people work very hard on a regular  
7 basis, they are very helpful.

8 A number of our state legislators have been  
9 active in developing our state water policy and in  
10 supporting it, so I'd like to recognize a few of the  
11 people that I've seen, and I hope I haven't missed  
12 anyone. Representative Daniel, who is one of the  
13 authors of our water policy or the groundwater  
14 management act is here, Representative Daniel, there  
15 you are, thank you. Representative Jean Doerge is  
16 also here. Representative Doerge has been very  
17 active. Representative Mike Walsworth, thank you, and  
18 Representative Jay McCallum who's been very active,  
19 but is leaving us to be a judge now from the  
20 Legislature, he's been very helpful as well. Senator  
21 Bill Jones I know is here, and I think Senator Jones  
22 wanted to say a word of welcome. Senator Jones, did  
23 you want to? No? Okay. Have I missed any other of  
24 our -- oh, good. Thank you very much. Are there any  
25 other that I missed? Oh, sorry, Representative  
26 Gallot, nice to see you here. We've spoken on the  
27 phone, and he's also very interested in water policy,  
28 so I'm glad to see you here.

29 And, of course, thanks to our Sparta Conservation  
30 District Commissioners, we're looking forward to

1 hearing from you tonight. Are there any other elected  
2 officials that would like to be recognized? All  
3 right, great, thank you.

4 With that we'll proceed on our agenda, but I will  
5 note that Mr. Durrett is one of our Commissioners, a  
6 representative of the Sparta Commission on the  
7 Louisiana Ground Water Management Commission, and we  
8 have advised Mr. Durrett, as he is one of the  
9 applicants, or one of the members of the Sparta  
10 Commission that he recuse himself from these matters.  
11 So Mr. Durrett will be representing the Sparta  
12 Commission on deliberation of this application.

13 Next we'll hear an overview of the application  
14 process from Anthony Duplechin with the Office of  
15 Conservation. And I'd just like to mention that the  
16 Act designates the Office of Conservation in the State  
17 Department of Natural Resources as the staff for the  
18 ground water management commission, which is housed in  
19 the governor's office. Tony?

20 MR. DUPLÉCHIN:

21 Thank you, Karen. I'd like to spend a few  
22 minutes giving you a little background on the process  
23 and how we got to this hearing tonight. The first  
24 thing that happens when someone applies or wants to  
25 apply to have an area declared critical is that they  
26 must file what's called a notice of intent in the  
27 official parish journal of all of the parishes that  
28 would be affected by the application. This notice of  
29 intent must include the applicant's name, address, and  
30 phone number; a brief description of the subject; a

1 description of the location and a map clear enough to  
2 easily identify the location of the proposed critical  
3 area; a statement that if the area is declared a  
4 critical groundwater area, then groundwater use might  
5 be restricted; and a statement that comments be sent  
6 to the Commissioner of the Office of Conservation.  
7 The actual application itself must be filed with the  
8 Office of Conservation, or with the Commissioner,  
9 rather, no sooner than 30 days and no later than 60  
10 days after the publication of these notices of intent.

11 The application must include, once again, the  
12 applicant's name, address, and phone number; a  
13 statement of the applicant's interest which is or may  
14 be affected; identification of the aquifer in  
15 question; identification of the proposed critical  
16 area; facts and evidence supporting application; a  
17 statement of how no action would impact groundwater  
18 resources; and proof that the notice of intent was  
19 published. In addition, the applicant must also  
20 submit recommended management controls.

21 Within 30 days of receipt of the application, the  
22 Commission will notify the applicant whether or not  
23 the application is complete. The Commission will then  
24 review and analyze information in the application, and  
25 a record of all public documents will be kept at the  
26 Office of Conservation in Baton Rouge. The Commission  
27 shall then schedule one initial public hearing in the  
28 affected area -- in the area affected by the  
29 application. Notice of this hearing is to be  
30 published in the official state journal and in the

1 official journal of each parish affected by the  
2 application at least 30 days prior to the hearing,  
3 which brings us to tonight.

4 This initial public hearing is fact-finding in  
5 nature. There will no cross-examination, and the  
6 applicant will be given an opportunity to present all  
7 relative information. There's also an opportunity for  
8 presentations by local, state, and federal agencies,  
9 as well as anyone else who wishes to get up and make a  
10 statement. All parties shall be permitted to speak  
11 and an official record will be kept.

12 Following tonight's hearing, the Commission will  
13 issue an order in a timely manner based on scientific  
14 data and any other relevant information. The order  
15 will contain a statement of findings, which will  
16 include a designation of the critical area,  
17 recommended management controls, and a response to  
18 comments.

19 Recommended management controls may include  
20 restrictions on withdrawals and a requirement for  
21 permits for new wells. If permits for new wells are  
22 required, there may be restrictions on well spacing  
23 and on well depth. If restrictions on withdrawals are  
24 required, the highest priority for withdrawals will be  
25 given to groundwater use for human consumption, public  
26 health, and safety. Other uses of groundwater shall  
27 be of equal priority and limitations will be  
28 determined on a proportional basis. The proposed  
29 order and management controls will be made available  
30 to the applicant, hearing participants, and anyone

1 requesting a copy. That's why it's important that  
2 people fill out those little blue cards even if they  
3 do not intend to make a statement tonight. Following  
4 this, the Commission will hold a hearing on the  
5 proposed order in each parish affected by that order.  
6 Notice of this hearing will be provided at least 15  
7 days prior to the hearing, and the Commission will  
8 adopt final orders and management controls after this  
9 hearing process has been completed.

10 COMMISSIONER GAUTREAUX:

11 Thank you, Tony. Our next item on the agenda is  
12 Rules of Conduct by Stephen Walker. As I mentioned,  
13 the Department of Natural Resources, Office of  
14 Conservation is the staff and Steven is an attorney on  
15 staff, and he's going to serve as our hearing officer  
16 tonight.

17 MR. WALKER:

18 Thank you, Commissioner Gautreaux. Welcome to  
19 the Louisiana Ground Water Management Commission  
20 public hearing under Docket No. GWMC 02-0001 for the  
21 Sparta Groundwater Conservation District Commission,  
22 also referred to as the Sparta Commission, application  
23 to designate a critical groundwater area in north  
24 Louisiana. The Louisiana Ground Water Management  
25 Commission was created and authorized by Act 446 of  
26 2001. Once again, my name is Stephen Walker, and I've  
27 been asked to conduct tonight's hearing.

28 In addition to the commissioners here, I would  
29 like to introduce some members of the staff. You've  
30 already met Mr. Duplechin. We also have Tim Seiler, a

1 geologist with the Office of Ground Water Management,  
2 Ms. Charlotte Hardison, she's the nice lady that's  
3 been helping everyone in the back, and also here  
4 tonight is Dr. M.B. Kumar, a geologist with the  
5 Louisiana Office of Conservation.

6 I ask, once again, that each of you wishing to  
7 make a comment tonight, to please fill out one of  
8 these blue cards that we have at various places around  
9 the auditorium. Please indicate whether or not you'd  
10 like to make a statement, and I will generally  
11 recognize those persons in the order that I receive  
12 the cards from the court reporter.

13 On a procedural note, after the close of the  
14 public comment period, the Louisiana Ground Water  
15 Management Commission will give a thorough review to  
16 all information submitted by all parties. When a  
17 draft order becomes available, it will be disseminated  
18 to the interested parties. Any future hearings  
19 regarding this application will be after due public  
20 notice in a similar fashion to tonight's hearing.

21 The Sparta Groundwater Conservation District  
22 Commission application seeks to designate a certain  
23 area to be a critical groundwater area consisting of  
24 all of the parishes of Claiborne, Union, Lincoln,  
25 Jackson, and Ouachita, and certain portions of the  
26 parishes of Webster, Caddo, Bossier, Bienville,  
27 Caldwell, Winn and Natchitoches, all as more  
28 particularly described in the application. In  
29 addition, the application proposes certain management  
30 controls for the Sparta aquifer, which are detailed in

1 the application.

2 Copies of the Sparta Commission application were  
3 filed with the Caddo Parish commission, the Police  
4 Juries, and the public libraries of the parishes  
5 affected by the application, and have been available  
6 for viewing by the public. Public notices regarding  
7 the hearing tonight were published by the Louisiana  
8 Ground Water Management Commission in The Advocate as  
9 well as the Bienville Democrat Ringgold Record,  
10 Bossier Press Tribune, Shreveport Times, Caldwell  
11 Watchman Progress, Haynesville News, Jackson  
12 Independent, Morning Paper, Natchitoches Times,  
13 Ouachita Citizen, The Gazette, Minden Press-Herald,  
14 and Winn Parish Enterprise, all on or before October  
15 17, 2002.

16 The purpose of tonight's public hearing is for  
17 the Commission to receive relevant comments from all  
18 interested parties regarding this application. I  
19 stress the word "relevant" since such comments will be  
20 considered by the Commission in reaching a decision  
21 regarding the Sparta Commission application. An  
22 example of a relevant comment would be whether or not  
23 the application is in full compliance with Act 446 of  
24 2001 and all of the applicable rules and regulations.

25 As a matter of information, the Ground Water  
26 Management Commission has existing rules and  
27 regulations regarding the filing of applications and  
28 the hearing process, which can be found at Louisiana  
29 Administrative Code, Title 43, Part IX, Subpart 2,  
30 Chapters 31 through 35.

1           In addition to tonight's public hearing the  
2 public comment period will remain open until 4:30 p.m.  
3 on December 19, 2002. Please understand that tonight  
4 you may make oral statements or submit written  
5 comments. You may also submit written comments  
6 through the close of the public comment period. You  
7 may make your comments in the form of a statement or  
8 you may also make them in the form of a question;  
9 however, if you choose to make a comment in the form  
10 of a question tonight, please do not wait for an  
11 immediate response. All significant and relevant  
12 public comments will receive a response in the  
13 Response to Comment section of any proposed order of  
14 the Commission. All written comments will receive the  
15 same level of consideration as any oral comments.

16           If you have a lengthy statement that you intend  
17 to read, please summarize the statement and hand the  
18 written statement to the court reporter for inclusion  
19 in the record. If you plan to enter into the record  
20 any oversized document, that's larger than legal size,  
21 we ask that you have a copy that is reduced to at  
22 least legal size for the record. If you plan to enter  
23 into the record any videotape or computer  
24 presentation, such as PowerPoint, you must have a copy  
25 tonight for the court reporter.

26           Once again, I ask that each of you wishing to  
27 make comments tonight to please fill out one of these  
28 blue cards. Please do not disrupt the comments, as  
29 such only tends to distort or mask the tape recording  
30 and makes the job of the court reporter more

1 difficult. Once again, the public comment period will  
2 be held open for a period of 30 days to receive any  
3 additional comments from the public, that is until  
4 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 19, 2002. Written  
5 comments must be submitted to the Louisiana Ground  
6 Water Management Commission, P.O. Box 94275, Baton  
7 Rouge, Louisiana, 70804-9275, Attention: Anthony J.  
8 Duplechin, Jr. Please reference Docket No. GWMC 02-  
9 0001. If you need that address again, please see one  
10 of us after the hearing tonight. And, once again, all  
11 written comments will receive the same level of  
12 consideration as any oral comments.

13 At this time I will ask Mr. Duplechin to file  
14 into the record the appropriate state exhibits and  
15 provide a synopsis of the application process.

16 MR. DUPLECHIN:

17 Thank you, Mr. Walker. The first exhibit I would  
18 like to file into the record is labeled State Exhibit  
19 GWMC-1, it's a copy of Act 446.

20 The second exhibit, labeled State Exhibit GWMC-2,  
21 is a copy of the rules for the conduct of hearings.

22 The third exhibit is a copy of a typical notice  
23 of intent filed by the Sparta Ground Water  
24 Conservation District Commission, and it is labeled  
25 State Exhibit GWMC-3. The reason this is a copy is  
26 the originals of the notice of intent are part of the  
27 application itself, which will also be filed tonight.

28 State Exhibit GWMC-4 is the original application  
29 received by the Louisiana Ground Water Management  
30 Commission on July 25, 2002.

1 State Exhibit GWMC-5 is a copy of a letter sent  
2 from the Ground Water Management Commission staff to  
3 the Sparta Groundwater Conservation District  
4 Commission identifying additional information that  
5 needed to be included in the application in order to  
6 consider the application complete.

7 State Exhibit GWMC-6 is the amended application,  
8 which was sent in in response to the request by the  
9 staff for additional information.

10 State Exhibit GWMC-7 is a copy of a letter,  
11 determination of administration completeness on the  
12 application, which was sent to the Sparta Groundwater  
13 Conservation District on August 23rd by the staff.

14 State Exhibits GWMC-8A through M are proofs of  
15 publication for the notice of public hearing that the  
16 Ground Water Management Commission filed with the 12  
17 parish journals in north Louisiana, as well as the  
18 Baton Rouge Advocate, the official state journal in  
19 Baton Rouge.

20 And finally, State Exhibit GWMC-9 is a folder  
21 containing comments which have been received in  
22 response to the application as allowed for in the  
23 rules, and this exhibit will be left open for  
24 additional comments to be made.

25 MR. WALKER:

26 Thank you, Mr. Duplechin. The Louisiana Ground  
27 Water Management Commission has requested that the  
28 applicant, the Sparta Commission, make a presentation  
29 tonight regarding this application for the benefit of  
30 the commissioners and the public. Afterwards, I will

1 take comments from any representatives of any  
2 governmental agencies. Finally, I will take comments  
3 from the public. Since we have some Commission  
4 members here tonight, I will allow them to question  
5 any speakers they may wish, however, only Commission  
6 members will be allowed to question the speakers.

7 At this time I will call Mr. Richard Durrett to  
8 begin this presentation.

9 MR. DURRETT:

10 First of all, while they're moving down here, I'd  
11 like to welcome everybody here. We've been working on  
12 this Sparta for five and a half years, and we haven't  
13 been able to get over 20 people at a time to listen to  
14 us, so I'm truly excited about the crowd we have, and  
15 I thank you all for coming. We've felt like for five  
16 and a half years this is a very important subject,  
17 it's a very important natural resource that we have,  
18 and we want to try to present to you tonight our  
19 information that we have.

20 I'd also like to welcome the state commission to  
21 north Louisiana. You're sitting right here in the  
22 middle of the Sparta in Lincoln Parish and we'd like  
23 to welcome you here. They always want to know why I  
24 want to have the meeting in the afternoon down there.  
25 Now they've had to drive up here, maybe they know how  
26 long it takes to drive back down to Baton Rouge, since  
27 I'm the only one from north Louisiana.

28 I'd also like to recognize the Sparta Commission  
29 that is here tonight. Can I get y'all to stand? They  
30 are all down here on the first two or three rows. I'd

1 like to thank them for the work that they've done,  
2 thank you. We have 19 members of the Sparta  
3 Commission; ten are appointed by police juries, six  
4 appointed by municipalities that use over 500,000  
5 gallons of water per day, and three are appointed by  
6 industry. As I said, we've been working on this  
7 project for five and a half years, and we are finally  
8 to the point that we have some information that we  
9 would like to present and to be considered tonight.

10 We have a study that has been done by Meyer,  
11 Meyer, LaCroix & Hixson of the Sparta aquifer, and,  
12 just to give you an idea of the information, this is  
13 the size of the study. Now, I'm not going to go  
14 through all this tonight, part of this, as Tony said,  
15 has been entered in with the application, but I'm  
16 going to try to summarize a little bit of the  
17 important facts of the study that relate to the  
18 application, and that's the part that we're going to  
19 go through first.

20 First of all, we have a map of the freshwater  
21 extent of the Sparta, and on the left side, the blue  
22 part is the recharge area. That's the area where the  
23 Sparta aquifer comes to the ground. That's over  
24 around Minden, on up into Arkansas and back down in  
25 Louisiana. Let me also say that the Sparta goes up  
26 into Arkansas. Arkansas is working on their problem,  
27 and we have some people here from Arkansas tonight  
28 that we've been, over the five and a half years,  
29 meeting with the Arkansas people and working back and  
30 forth on this problem.

1           The green area is the freshwater extent of the  
2           Sparta aquifer, and then the dotted line on the east  
3           side is the area where the freshwater ends and the  
4           saltwater takes over. Now, that is an approximate  
5           line. That line is being better defined by a study  
6           that we have joint ventured with with USGS. This is a  
7           map showing a number of wells that were used in the  
8           study, 283 wells that were used in the study by Meyer,  
9           Meyer, LaCroix & Hixson. There were 90-something USGS  
10          wells that were utilized to plot the model and the  
11          level of the water in the aquifer.

12          In the study, the areas of risk were areas where  
13          the drawdown was greater than one foot per year, the  
14          areas where the groundwater is below the top of the  
15          Sparta formation, and the area is at risk to saltwater  
16          encroachment. As I showed you on the previous map,  
17          the saltwater is coming from the southeast. This is a  
18          map from the study that shows the area where the  
19          drawdown is greater than one foot per year, the level  
20          of the aquifer is falling more than one foot a year.  
21          That area is shaded right here. This is the recharge  
22          area, this is the area where it's dropping more than a  
23          foot a year. This is the area where the water is  
24          below the top of the aquifer, according to the study.  
25          This area is shaded here. And this is a map combining  
26          the two, showing you the area where you have -- where  
27          it's dropping more than a foot a year and the area  
28          where it's below the top of the aquifer, and you also  
29          still see the saltwater line, approximate saltwater  
30          line that's on the east side.

1           This is a map showing the concentration of  
2 chlorides or saltwater in the area that was prepared,  
3 and as you can see, the 250 milligrams per liter is  
4 usually the secondary contamination level, and that  
5 area is over around the east side, around Monroe in  
6 Ouachita and Morehouse Parish.

7           This is from the study, the usage data out of the  
8 Sparta aquifer from 1980 to 2000. Just a few things  
9 to point out here, if you'll look at the totals at the  
10 bottom, we started in '80 at 64 million gallons per  
11 day, our peak was 1994 at 72 million, and in 2000  
12 we're still at about 70 million gallons per day.

13 Breaking it down by parishes, you can see the  
14 different parishes. The difference in '94 and '99,  
15 the drop, a lot of that's attributed to Bienville  
16 Parish. Bienville Parish went from 17 million to 11  
17 million, and that's attributed to Smurfit-Stone. The  
18 Smurfit-Stone wells, most of them are in Bienville  
19 Parish, and they are to be commended for what they've  
20 done in the last five or six years in reuse and  
21 conservation. They have reduced their pumpage. But  
22 you can see that went down 6 million, but the total  
23 didn't go down but two million, so we're still not  
24 gaining much ground on the usage out of the aquifer.

25           As I pointed out, the peak is 72 million gallons  
26 a day in '94. The following is a table ranking the  
27 parishes by use. As you can see, Ouachita Parish is  
28 the largest user with 23.68 million gallons per day.  
29 That's almost 34 percent of the usage out of the  
30 Sparta. Bienville is 12.34, Lincoln is 9.16, Webster,

1 Union, and Claiborne.

2 An ultimate 18-million-gallon-per-day reduction  
3 of pumpage is forecast by the model in the study to  
4 effect restoration of the Sparta aquifer by the year  
5 2025. What that study really says is we need to  
6 reduce 17 million of that by the year 2005, which  
7 probably won't be done, but the mathematical model  
8 that predicts what's going to happen to the aquifer  
9 over the next 25 years says that we need to reduce the  
10 pumpage 18 million gallons a day by 2025. This  
11 forecast remains valid only if the current consumption  
12 of the aquifer does not increase significantly over  
13 the next 25 years.

14 It's important to take timely action to begin the  
15 process to provide alternate source of water supply at  
16 the earliest possible time; to provide a cushion for  
17 economic growth, as we all know, we don't want it to  
18 stay the same as it is now, as that prediction of 18  
19 million gallons was. To provide a cushion for  
20 economic growth opportunities it's recommended that  
21 the total production capacity of the alternate surface  
22 water supply be at 30 million gallons a day. This  
23 provides us a \$12 million reserve capacity for  
24 increased economic growth and population growth. The  
25 reserve capacity will provide for economic growth  
26 permitting the recovery of the aquifer.

27 Alternate water sources should provide potable  
28 water supply of 30 million gallons per day, a 30-  
29 million-gallon-per-day alternative surface supply  
30 water would provide a 17 percent increase in available

1 water throughout the aquifer. A prolonged time for  
2 initiating reduction of the Sparta pumpage will  
3 produce further declines in water levels and would  
4 extend the recovery period of the Sparta aquifer.

5 Just to summarize the study, the current pumpage  
6 is 70 million gallons a day, if you don't remember  
7 anything else, this chart right here, 70 million  
8 gallons a day. The reduction of 18 million by 2025  
9 equals the sustainable Sparta pumpage of 52 million  
10 gallons per day. That's just to stabilize it. We  
11 have an alternative source of 30 million gallons a  
12 day, that gives us a planned future water supply of 82  
13 million, which is about 17 percent more than the 70  
14 million that we're using today.

15 And that summarizes a little bit of the study,  
16 and I want to go to the application, the application  
17 portion of the groundwater aquifer to be declared  
18 critical submitted to the Louisiana Ground Water  
19 Management Commission. The goals of the Sparta  
20 Groundwater Conservation District is to save and  
21 restore the Sparta aquifer for long-term future use as  
22 a major water supply source for domestic, industrial,  
23 and agricultural use. The Sparta Groundwater  
24 Commission voted to recommend to the Louisiana Ground  
25 Water Commission that the following parishes and noted  
26 areas be declared critical area; all of Claiborne, all  
27 of Union, Lincoln, Jackson and Ouachita, portions of  
28 Webster, Bossier, Bienville, Caldwell, Winn, and  
29 Natchitoches. Now, those are the sections, townships,  
30 and ranges which we had to submit it by, but this is a

1 map that shows a little bit of the section, townships,  
2 and ranges of the area that we are asking to be  
3 considered to be declared critical. The area along  
4 this, remember the area along the east side is the  
5 recharge area.

6 Supporting facts: the Sparta Groundwater  
7 Commission project committee made a thorough study of  
8 the available information and presented  
9 recommendations to the full Sparta Commission for  
10 consideration for possible adoption. The project  
11 committee reviewed several maps, written documentation  
12 received from the engineering firm of Meyer, Meyer,  
13 LaCroix & Hixson, which conducted the engineering  
14 study for the Sparta aquifer for the Sparta  
15 Commission, and URS, which conducted the modeling  
16 portion of the study as a subcontractor to Meyer,  
17 Meyer, LaCroix & Hixson.

18 The project committee considered three  
19 alternatives for designation of a critical groundwater  
20 area; the first being the area where the drawdown  
21 exceeds one foot per year, in other words, the water  
22 level is dropping more than a foot a year. The second  
23 is the area where the water surface has dropped below  
24 the top of the aquifer, and the third is the area  
25 where the saltwater intrusion is becoming a problem.  
26 This is the map, again, that's in the application,  
27 showing the area, as we pointed out before, this is a  
28 combination of where it's dropping more than a foot a  
29 year and it's below the top of the aquifer.

30 Saltwater intrusion will used further for

1 expanding the critical groundwater area at such time  
2 as the saltwater intrusion is more clearly defined.  
3 As I mentioned earlier, an ongoing USGS survey study  
4 is underway to more accurately establish the saltwater  
5 intrusion boundary. The Sparta Groundwater Commission  
6 has joint ventured with the USGS to do this study and  
7 better define where the saltwater intrusion line is,  
8 and we should have that information shortly.

9 The Meyer, Meyer, LaCroix & Hixson study shows  
10 that the water use from the Sparta aquifer, now  
11 approximately 70 million gallons a day, must be  
12 reduced to 52 million gallons per day, a reduction of  
13 18 million gallons a day, to sustain the aquifer for  
14 long-term use. Recommended management controls:  
15 provide an avenue of cooperation between the Louisiana  
16 Ground Water Commission and the Sparta Groundwater  
17 Commission and all state and federal agencies to  
18 restrict -- No. 1, restrict the construction, where  
19 possible, of any facility in the recharge area, that's  
20 where the Sparta comes to the ground, in the recharge  
21 area, which would be detrimental, allowing only  
22 acceptable, clean water to infiltrate through the  
23 ground recharge area. In other words, no hazardous  
24 waste sites, no landfill sites that would contaminate  
25 the aquifer in the recharge area.

26 Second, new water wells should be subject to a  
27 permitting process, existing water wells that exceed  
28 their well design capacity, that's a pumpage rate  
29 that's shown on the DOTD well registration, shall be  
30 subject to a permitting process. This assumes that

1 existing wells will continue pumping at their  
2 historical rates as reported to DOTD annually  
3 established over the past three years and not increase  
4 pumpage dramatically. The permit cost, the cost of  
5 the permitting would be the amount required to cover  
6 the cost of administering the permitting process.  
7 Permit cost will be collected by the permitting  
8 agency, and we recommend that that be the local  
9 agency, the Sparta Groundwater Commission, be the  
10 permitting agency.

11 Well type: any well drilled or constructed for  
12 the principal purpose of producing groundwater from  
13 the Sparta aquifer. Restrictions of water wells:  
14 permit will be required for all new water wells  
15 producing in excess of 50,000 gallons per day for any  
16 day during the calendar year. I want to emphasize the  
17 50,000 gallons per day because there's been some  
18 discussion about home wells and wells that are not --  
19 that don't produce 50,000 gallons a day. This  
20 recommendation is for wells 50,000 gallons per day and  
21 more.

22 Evaluations of the permit applications: 1,  
23 recommend that the Louisiana Legislature grant  
24 authority to the Sparta Groundwater Commission to  
25 evaluate the well permit application and to issue  
26 permits. We feel like that the permit application  
27 should be evaluated on the local basis rather than by  
28 Baton Rouge. Evaluations shall take into  
29 consideration the following: the date of application,  
30 the name of the owner, the location of the well, well

1 spacing and depth, design capacity, anticipated usage,  
2 anticipated date of initiating well construction or  
3 drilling, classify as to whether or not the well is to  
4 be used for public, industrial, private or  
5 agricultural purposes, demonstrate the effect the new  
6 well will have on the water level and the water  
7 quality of the Sparta aquifer. This is very  
8 important, if you have a large quantity well that's  
9 pulling out of the aquifer, what effect will that have  
10 on the aquifer over the next 20 years.

11 Conditions of denial: permit will be denied if  
12 the application is incomplete or if erroneous  
13 information is provided. The permit will be denied if  
14 sustainability of the aquifer will not be maintained.  
15 And the permit will be denied if there will be a  
16 decrease in water quality, that is, saltwater  
17 contamination which exceeds 250 milligrams per liter.

18 The Sparta Groundwater Commission and the  
19 Louisiana Ground Water Commission, this is  
20 recommendation, should recommend that the Louisiana  
21 Legislature develop incentives for the major users in  
22 the Sparta aquifer to reduce their usage, either by  
23 conservation or going to surface water sources.  
24 Recommend that the Sparta Groundwater Conservation and  
25 Louisiana Ground Water Management Commission work with  
26 the Louisiana Legislature to create a funding  
27 mechanism for the purpose of public conservation,  
28 education program. We feel that to solve the  
29 sustainability of the aquifer we need to look at  
30 alternative surface water sources and we need to learn

1 to conserve, and that's the reason for these two.

2 This is a map showing the proposed boundaries of  
3 the critical area. There's also, I think, a copy of  
4 that in the lobby, and, also, there's a copy of this,  
5 there's a number of copies of this presentation if you  
6 didn't get one coming in, if you want to get one when  
7 you leave. And that concludes that part of the  
8 presentation.

9 Let me just make one other point here. We have a  
10 website, [www.spartaaquifer.com](http://www.spartaaquifer.com). The complete copy of  
11 this study that was done is on that website. A copy  
12 of application will be on the website along with other  
13 interesting information. There's a link on there that  
14 I'd like to call your attention to to the USGS wells,  
15 where they have monitored, over the last 20 years, the  
16 water level in the aquifer in the different parishes  
17 and the location. It's a link, it has USGS well link  
18 on the left side, and you go to that and you can look  
19 at that information.

20 One other point that I'd like to make and then  
21 I'll be through. There's an article that appeared in  
22 the Baton Rouge Advocate, June the 25th, where a  
23 member of Fenstermaker, who's doing the study for the  
24 Louisiana Ground Water Commission, June the 27th,  
25 remember June the 27th, we didn't submit the  
26 applications until July the 25th, where a member of  
27 the Fenstermaker, who is the consultant doing the  
28 state groundwater commission, made the statement that  
29 the Sparta Groundwater Conservation Commission does  
30 not have the necessary information for the state

1 commission to take action on the critical designation.  
2 And we disagree with that, especially since he has  
3 assumed this before the application was even  
4 submitted. And we would like for any evaluation that  
5 is done of our application by the state ground water  
6 commission to exclude Mr. Darling. With that I will  
7 conclude.

8 COMMISSIONER GAUTREAUX:

9 All right, we're going to start the public  
10 comments in just a second, and I'll turn it back over  
11 to Stephen Walker, but I'd like to do two things  
12 first. For the record, note that Michael Taylor from  
13 the Department of Economic Development is here with  
14 us, he's also a Commissioner, and also, once more  
15 thank all of you for coming out tonight. You're  
16 participating in a historic moment. We thank you for  
17 being here, we look forward to hearing your comments,  
18 questions for the record tonight. So with that,  
19 Stephen, proceed.

20 MR. WALKER:

21 Thank you. Do we have any Commission members  
22 that have any questions for Mr. Durrett? All right,  
23 seeing none, thank you Mr. Durrett.

24 All right, we're going to try to pull out the  
25 local, state, and federal agencies. Is Mr. Ralph Hock  
26 in with the Webster Parish Water Advisory board?  
27 Would you like to make a statement, sir?

28 MR. HOCK:

29 It's embarrassing that the least shall be first.

30 MR. WALKER:

1           Would you please state your name and who you  
2 represent, for the record, please, before you begin.

3 MR. HOCK:

4           My name, sir, is Ralph Hock. I have done work  
5 for the Webster Parish Police Jury, for the Dorcheat  
6 Soil and Water Conservation. I've done work for the  
7 city of Minden, I've done work for the community of  
8 Webster and Claiborne and Bienville Parish. This is  
9 civic obligation that I have performed this work.  
10 I've done it trying to help my neighbors. I have a  
11 civic obligation to those people. I am greatly  
12 concerned about my water rights, and I see that they  
13 are rapidly eroding away in some of the steps being  
14 taken.

15           I greatly appreciate all the work that has been  
16 done, the five and a half years of work that the  
17 Sparta Commission has been working on it. I have only  
18 been working on this water problem for 40 or 50 years,  
19 and I see that it is very complex.

20           There is something that I would like to bring to  
21 your attention and that is the Louisiana Mineral Code,  
22 Revised Statute, Title 31, Act 50 of 1974, the  
23 Louisiana Mineral Code, and it set forth the ownership  
24 of the minerals that I have and you have. In there it  
25 provides for oil and gas, it provides for soil,  
26 gravel, and water. I'm not sure, I'm not a lawyer,  
27 but they wanted to protect my rights, and I greatly  
28 appreciate it, it's a wonderful thing they've done.  
29 Through the Department of Natural Resources it's been  
30 my fortune, good fortune, to work with this

1 Conservation Department, because that's where I've  
2 made my bread and butter is in the oil business, but  
3 we had to have water, and we studied it. So I  
4 respectfully recommend that the thoughts expressed in  
5 the Louisiana Mineral Code, please capitalize upon the  
6 tremendous amount of information, all the legal  
7 problems they've solved in the Department of Natural  
8 Resources, those people are marvelous, but I see that  
9 it's being bypassed in some of this administrative  
10 procedure.

11 I have in my hands an exhibit, Figure 12, Sparta  
12 Water Aquifer as prepared by the engineers, in which  
13 they show a pipeline system, a procedure to gather  
14 water. It's using water they've already got, and I  
15 have superimposed upon that the outcrop of the Sparta  
16 Sand. It also shows the location of the Dorcheat  
17 Bayou and Black Lake Bayou. Somehow or another it was  
18 overlooked. It's very, very critical.

19 And I have also looked at another exhibit, and  
20 that is an exhibit prepared by the Louisiana  
21 Department of Transportation and Development. Those  
22 people have done a marvelous job. They've worked with  
23 the U.S. Geological survey, and they issued a report  
24 in 1991, and this exhibit and report of 90-4183,  
25 Sparta Aquifer Water Level Changes. And it shows the  
26 water level, this report shows the water level in 1980  
27 and then in 1989, a period of nine years in which they  
28 diligently studied the water situation.

29 And I was amazed at the scientific information,  
30 geological information; the hydrogeology, the flow of

1 water, and where water does not flow. And I very  
2 cautiously mentioned to the engineer on your staff  
3 that I would like to submit that later. I didn't, I'm  
4 embarrassed to take your time now, but this matter,  
5 I'm deeply touched, it is very critical, and I would  
6 respectfully like to submit it for your consideration  
7 later.

8 But may I point out, in this exhibit, Bienville  
9 Parish, man, they're going to take a beating. Nobody  
10 has come forth with anything to reimburse them for  
11 some of the water rights that they are fixing to lose.  
12 They don't know it and realize it, but -- I won't  
13 burden you, but you have the -- the record will  
14 reflect where these exhibits are. And just to give  
15 you an example, sir, the Dorcheat Soil and Water  
16 Conservation asked me to present, they want to know  
17 what's going on, they're interested in water  
18 conservation, and they say the Dorcheat Soil and Water  
19 Conservation takes its responsibility regarding our  
20 natural resources with grave seriousness, and has a  
21 lengthy history of working with landowners under our  
22 state association, conservation development and self-  
23 government.

24 The Dorcheat Soil and Water Conservation, to that  
25 end, is hereby unanimously resolved that while it has  
26 no objection to Webster Parish being designated a  
27 critical area, regarding study of the Sparta aquifer,  
28 it requests that any and all legal action be tabled  
29 until the district feels that sufficient information  
30 and study has been obtained to allow the parish to

1 address its own water-related problems without state  
2 intervention. Thank you, sir, you've been very kind,  
3 I appreciate it.

4 MR. WALKER:

5 Thank you, Mr. Hock. Due to the large number of  
6 commentors, (applause) we've got a very large number  
7 of commentors tonight, and so I'm going to ask you to  
8 please hold your applause until the very end. Also,  
9 I'm going to need to put probably about a ten-minute  
10 time limit on the speakers so that we can try to make  
11 sure that everybody has an opportunity to be heard  
12 tonight who wants to be heard. Now, of course, you  
13 can still submit your written comments until the end  
14 of the public comment period on December 19th.

15 All right, our next speaker is Mike Walsworth.

16 COMMISSIONER GAUTREAUX:

17 Representative Walsworth had to leave for a  
18 function in West Monroe, but he was here earlier.

19 MR. WALKER:

20 Tommy Chatham.

21 MR. CHATHAM:

22 My name is Tommy Chatham. I'm with the Jackson  
23 Parish Watershed District, I am the President. I'd  
24 like to thank you for giving me time to speak to y'all  
25 tonight. We'd like to go on record now with the  
26 Jackson Parish Watershed District to be opposed to  
27 Jackson Parish being included into this program.  
28 After careful review into Phase 1 and 2 of Sparta  
29 Aquifer Studies, the proposals done by y'all's people,  
30 we're opposed to it. The governor -- governing board

1 is opposed to the critical groundwater area  
2 designation, and also the proposal to use surface  
3 water from Caney Lake.

4 Our opposition to using surface water from Caney  
5 Lake is due to the small watershed area, 41.5 square  
6 miles. We cannot support the proposed usage that  
7 y'all are proposing. The engineering firm doing the  
8 study ignored historical data about Caney Lake water  
9 levels and did not ask for any data from the watershed  
10 district. Caney Lake was built for recreational  
11 purposes. Between the cost of the lake construction  
12 and the state park, the state has invested \$32  
13 million. Drawing water from Caney Lake jeopardizes  
14 this investment.

15 Our opposition to the critical groundwater area  
16 designation is that other parishes are the true  
17 problem areas and those proposed projects should  
18 happen first with a new study done once these projects  
19 are operative. The Jackson Parish Watershed District  
20 has the legal authority that the Sparta Groundwater  
21 Commission is seeking. This Commission is willing to  
22 work with any and all agencies to solve water usage  
23 issues in Jackson Parish. These decisions should be  
24 based on correct data and common sense.

25 By y'all's own program here, in Jackson Parish we  
26 show a reduction from 5300 to 2331. We are working to  
27 control our water usage in Jackson Parish through our  
28 own agencies in Jackson Parish. You need to contact  
29 your local agencies and get more information before  
30 y'all include Jackson Parish. I'd like to thank you

1 for my time.

2 MR. WALKER:

3 Thank you, sir. All right, our next speaker is  
4 Mr. Albert Hulett. Mr. Hulett, would you like to make  
5 a statement?

6 MR. HULETT:

7 I'll reserve mine for later.

8 MR. WALKER:

9 Mr. Edward Lee.

10 MR. LEE:

11 I will reserve my statement for later.

12 MR. WALKER:

13 Todd Culpepper.

14 MR. CULPEPPER:

15 Thank you, my name is Todd Culpepper. I'm the  
16 president of the Jackson Parish Police Jury, and also  
17 the Jackson Parish Chamber of Commerce. I would like  
18 to thank the Ground Water Commission for being here  
19 today to listen, to gather more, additional  
20 information before we take any step one way or the  
21 other.

22 Jackson Parish, the citizens realize the  
23 importance of the Sparta and what we need to do to  
24 save it; however, Jackson Parish is going to ask that  
25 we not be included, that we be omitted from any  
26 critical designation by this body. We believe that  
27 the documents and the study will verify that Jackson  
28 Parish has done a tremendous amount of work to cut  
29 back on Sparta use.

30 The figures that are available in the study shows

1 that we were using 5.9 million gallons per day in  
2 1994. Jackson Parish is down to 2.3 million gallons a  
3 day from that time, and we believe the figures would  
4 even show that they would be lower than that today.  
5 We also believe that we need to look at the list of  
6 the top 87 percent of consumption on the Sparta. It  
7 is not with Jackson Parish, we're not even in the top  
8 87 percent. Now, once again, I would like to say  
9 that we do realize that we have a obligation and a  
10 responsibility to do everything that we can, but what  
11 we're saying is that we do not need to be critical to  
12 take those steps because we're taking the steps today,  
13 yesterday, the day before. And we are asking you to  
14 also look at the information in the study that shows  
15 the population for Jackson Parish over the next 25  
16 years decreasing, seven percent over that time frame.  
17 That would lead me to believe that the population is  
18 decreasing, the need for water would also decrease.

19 On top of that issue I think that it's important  
20 that this body realizes that there's some additional  
21 information at this time that is being put in the  
22 model that was not put in the model to begin with in  
23 reference to Jackson Parish that I think it would make  
24 several more issues that we could bring up at a  
25 different time when all that information is available.

26 There was a, I don't want to say a  
27 misunderstanding, or what, but there was some  
28 information that was out there that was not used to  
29 begin with. Since then, the committee has agreed for  
30 that information to be put in the study and we're

1 waiting to see exactly what that information is going  
2 to bring to the table for us to look at. But we think  
3 that any action at this time with Jackson Parish would  
4 be premature because all the information is not in.

5 And we also believe that when we look at this  
6 problem, everybody has an obligation, but I definitely  
7 believe that we need to look at the biggest problem  
8 areas and try to help them, because it's apparent that  
9 the smaller parishes are going to do, or at least, I  
10 don't want to speak for anybody, but Jackson Parish,  
11 we're going to do what we need to do, and that's what  
12 we're doing right now.

13 So I would ask this body not to deem it  
14 appropriate to bring Jackson Parish in as critical,  
15 and that if it is determined that any area is  
16 critical, that the power over the Sparta be left with  
17 a local government. If you declare Ouachita critical,  
18 I would hope that Ouachita Parish would be the  
19 governing body to handle those issues, and that would  
20 be the case with anybody.

21 And if that's not available to the people in this  
22 Sparta area, I would request that the House of  
23 Representatives and the State Senate have the control,  
24 because I think that we have a lot of good people, but  
25 the accountability is with elected officials, and  
26 without accountability being there there could be  
27 tremendous problems in the future. Thank you.

28 MR. WALKER:

29 Thank you, Mr. Culpepper. Mr. Gary Carlisle.

30 MR. CARLISLE:

1 I'm here from Bienville Parish. I'm Gary  
2 Carlisle. I'm a member of the City Council, the Town  
3 of Arcadia, and a member of the Sparta Groundwater  
4 Conservation District Commission. I, too, am  
5 concerned that the management control should be  
6 augmented or that the parish police jury be included  
7 in the management control, and that if there is any  
8 bonded indebtedness or sales tax elections that those  
9 parish police juries be involved in the decision.

10 I'm also proposing that one solution for the  
11 whole Sparta is inadequate. There are individual  
12 solutions for each parish and each parish should make  
13 those decisions. I'll place my stuff in writing and  
14 I'll submit it by the time of the deadline. I thank  
15 you for your time.

16 MR. WALKER:

17 Thank you, Mr. Carlisle. Our next speaker is Mr.  
18 Jack Beard. Mr. Beard.

19 MR. BEARD:

20 I'm Jack Beard, and I'm president of the Lincoln  
21 Parish Police Jury, representing about 42,500+ people  
22 who are sitting right in the middle of the Sparta  
23 Sand, and are very concerned about where we're going.  
24 Mr. Hock has been in the business for 50 years, I've  
25 only been here five and a half in terms of the water  
26 situation. And I compliment him, I think the Lord  
27 should have called him as a Baptist preacher, he's  
28 great.

29 Getting back to the subject, welcome to Lincoln,  
30 we are certainly glad you all are here. Five and a

1 half years to reaching tonight is just overwhelming to  
2 me because we started this in, I think in March of  
3 1996, on a rainy afternoon with about 30 people. Now  
4 as I look out over this crowd, it frightens me almost.  
5 I wish we could have had this many at first, five and  
6 a half years ago. We've reached a very critical place  
7 in our water situation. If the Sparta Sand was a  
8 patient, I think the doctors would have him in ICU,  
9 trying to stop the hemorrhaging. We're dropping, as  
10 you've already seen, at least two feet a year, and  
11 where we go from here, who knows? Saltwater's coming  
12 in from the southeast and the level of the water is  
13 depreciating.

14 People are shouting for economic development to  
15 come to this area. I'm not an industrialist, I'm not  
16 a great businessman, I'm a retired college professor,  
17 but if I were an industrialist and looking for a place  
18 to locate my processes, I don't think I'd be too happy  
19 about coming to Lincoln Parish in this vicinity with  
20 the water situation being what it is.

21 With all due respect to some of the gentlemen who  
22 have spoken before me, I'm concerned about our water  
23 and the future, not for me personally, we have water  
24 to last my lifetime, probably everybody in this room  
25 has water to last their lifetime, but I'm concerned  
26 about our children and our grandchildren down the  
27 road. As I look about and see all the people and  
28 friends in the audience, I think we just have to look  
29 northward to get an example of what this Commission,  
30 we hope you will do. We certainly, I'm speaking on

1       behalf of Lincoln Parish and the other 11 jurors who  
2       support me in asking you all to give heavy  
3       consideration to our application because we  
4       desperately need some type of control on our water  
5       situation.

6               Five and a half years ago we went up to Arkansas  
7       to study what they were doing. They did a tremendous  
8       job, and I see Ken Rudd and some of his entourage is  
9       here tonight, and I hope they speak later on, it might  
10      give us some idea how successful they've been. They  
11      have five counties up there have been designated  
12      critical areas, very much like what we're asking here.  
13      They have industry on board, they're in business of  
14      bringing the water from Ouachita River, they're  
15      fortunate, I would assume, in being able to do that, I  
16      don't know all the particulars. But if the Sparta  
17      Sand were a great soda and we're all sucking out of it  
18      with different sizes of straws, it's depreciating  
19      rapidly, faster than it can be replenished.

20             Now, if we go about this thing piecemeal, that's  
21      not going to solve our problem. We have got to pull  
22      together to determine what our problem is and how  
23      we're going to study it and fix it. The way I  
24      understand it tonight, the purpose of this meeting is  
25      not to come up with a solution, but to just get this  
26      area designated as a critical area with a request to  
27      the Legislature to start a plan to solve our problem,  
28      am I correct? I know you don't answer that now but  
29      maybe later you will.

30             So let's don't start putting the cart before the

1 horse. I don't think there's a person in this room  
2 tonight that will not say -- that will say that we  
3 don't have a problem. We do have a problem. How are  
4 we going to solve it? We're going to have to do it  
5 all together, and we respectfully ask you to give  
6 heavy consideration to our application from the Sparta  
7 Water Commission. Thank you very much.

8 MR. WALKER:

9 Thank you, sir. Do we have any questions from  
10 the Commission? (No response.) All right. Mr.  
11 Robert Reynolds, I see you have marked "if asked." Do  
12 you wish to make a statement, Mr. Reynolds?

13 MR. REYNOLDS:

14 Yes, sir.

15 MR. WALKER:

16 Well then you need to come forward, sir.

17 MR. REYNOLDS:

18 My name is Robert Reynolds, I'm from El Dorado.  
19 I'm a member of the Union County Water Conservation  
20 Board. Two of my colleagues are here with me tonight.  
21 What I see is tremendous. Y'all are doing what we  
22 were doing about three years ago, and this is part of  
23 the process. There are different points of view, all  
24 of them valid, but they've got to come together  
25 because the Sparta is worth saving. It's a tremendous  
26 natural resource, tremendously high-quality drinking  
27 water, and we in Arkansas have been fortunate to be  
28 able to work on this. We don't always agree, but we  
29 have come up with a plan and we are implementing it  
30 now.

1           We were recommended to make a 70 percent  
2 reduction in Sparta pumpage by the U.S. Geological  
3 Survey. Yours looks like about a 26 percent  
4 reduction. We achieved 10 percent by voluntary  
5 citizen efforts; people became aware of the problem,  
6 they cut back all across the county ten percent. They  
7 took their good habits to work with them, industry  
8 joined in and made another 10 percent cut. We were  
9 now 20 percent toward the 70, and for the first time  
10 in over 50 years, our water table quit declining. It  
11 didn't come up, but it quit going down.

12           We now have a program in Union County whereby  
13 we're developing the Ouachita River as an alternative  
14 source of supply to bring high-quality water to the  
15 three largest water users in the county. That will  
16 accomplish the 70 percent reduction. Using the USGS  
17 data they've projected that we will recover back to a  
18 healthy level in our aquifer in a 30-year period. If  
19 there's any way that we can help y'all, we want to do  
20 it. Any question they y'all have about what we're  
21 doing, we'll be happy to answer it.

22           And more power to you. We're in this thing  
23 together. I like the soda analogy, we've all got a  
24 straw, we're all part of the problem, but we're all  
25 part of the solution. It comes in different degrees  
26 of problem and different degrees of solution, but  
27 we're all in this together, any way that we can help  
28 you, we want to do it because anything that y'all do  
29 helps us and anything we do helps y'all.

30 MR. WALKER:

1 Any questions from the Commission? (No  
2 response.) All right, thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

3 Our next speaker is Senator Bill Jones. Senator  
4 Jones? Not at this time? Okay, how about  
5 Representative William Daniel. Would Representative  
6 Daniel like to make a statement?

7 REPRESENTATIVE DANIEL:

8 I'd like to reserve my statement until the end.

9 MR. WALKER:

10 All right, just going through these cards real  
11 quick, I think I've identified all of the local,  
12 state, and federal agencies, and I think we're through  
13 with those, so we'll be starting on members of the  
14 public. Is there any representative of any state,  
15 local, or federal agencies that submitted a card that  
16 I missed? Anyone? (No response.)

17 Just to let you know, we're going to try to take  
18 a little break at about 8 o'clock, which will be in  
19 about 35 minutes.

20 All right, our first speaker, once again I'll  
21 remind you, please try to stay within the ten-minute  
22 time limit, and I thank you for your understanding in  
23 this matter. Once again, please state your name and  
24 who you represent when you come to the podium. The  
25 first speaker is Mr. Jackie Reppond, I hope I  
26 pronounced that right. I'm sorry, I apologize.

27 MS. REPPOND:

28 You got part of it right, that's quite all right,  
29 I get mail all the time with Mr. Jackie Reppond. I  
30 don't really care to be viewed that way, though. My

1 name is Jackie Reppond, and I serve on the Sparta  
2 Groundwater Commission representing industry. There  
3 are only three of us on this board that represent  
4 industry. I represent a large industry in Union  
5 Parish and we employ 2,000 people, and we have  
6 approximately 175 poultry growers. So we have a large  
7 stake here.

8 We're looking to a sustainable development.  
9 We're looking to ways to recycle. We're looking right  
10 now at a system that could possibly cut our water use  
11 in half and hopefully with incentive program from the  
12 Legislature we'll be able to do this. Not only do we  
13 have a large stake in this matter; personally, I have  
14 two daughters and I have six grandchildren all living  
15 in Union Parish, so I have a personal reason for being  
16 concerned about the Sparta. But also, like some of  
17 the other voices that have been said here tonight, I  
18 prefer to see local government controlled from our  
19 region. I just think I'd feel more comfortable with  
20 the situation there, because I believe that with good  
21 common sense that we can take care of it. And I just  
22 thank you for the opportunity to share with you  
23 tonight.

24 MR. WALKER:

25 Do we have any questions from the Commission?  
26 (No response.) Thank you, Ms. Reppond.

27 Our next speaker is Jim Fannin. Mr. Fannin?

28 MR. FANNIN:

29 I'm Jim Fannin. I'm representing the Jackson  
30 Parish Cattlemen Association, I'm President of that

1 association, and also representing farmers in our  
2 area, along with many concerned citizens. Mr. Jack,  
3 I'm glad I took a shower before I came, because your  
4 comments, I'm not sure that I'd have water when I got  
5 home. I'm glad we're not as critical as it seems to  
6 be in your opinion.

7 We believe that the Sparta groundwater aquifer  
8 should not be declared a critical groundwater area at  
9 this time for the following reasons. We believe the  
10 Sparta Commission study to be incomplete and at this  
11 time not including all the information available, and  
12 by not including and involving more government and  
13 university personnel. This study gives the perception  
14 that those involved in making the report gave the  
15 Sparta Commission what they wanted rather than serving  
16 the best interest of the general public. The study  
17 gives the idea that the Sparta Commission should have  
18 control of all water and the authority to tax water  
19 even if it has no effect on drawdown or recharge of  
20 the Sparta aquifer.

21 We think that farm ponds, or impounded water, as  
22 the study would call it, and shallow wells that do not  
23 have any bearing on the Sparta aquifer should never  
24 have been included in this study. More of these  
25 should be encouraged to actually help save the Sparta  
26 water aquifer.

27 We think the Sparta study to be ill-advised when  
28 asking for taxing authority. This authority should  
29 remain with local and state elected -- and I ask  
30 elected to be underlined -- governing bodies. We as

1       cattlemen and farmers are very much interested in  
2       saving our water supply, and we'll always be willing  
3       to do our part, but until all facts are included and  
4       these items that create more government bureaucracies  
5       are removed, we ask that you deny the request of the  
6       Sparta Commission. Thanks for allowing this time to  
7       voice our concern.

8       MR. WALKER:

9             Do we have any questions by the Commission  
10       members? (No response.) Thank you, Mr. Fannin.

11            Our next speaker is Robert Greer. Mr. Greer?

12       MR. GREER:

13            I'm Robert Greer from Jackson Parish. During the  
14       past 40 years anyone who was involved in water  
15       resources knew that the Sparta aquifer was falling at  
16       the rate of 1-2 feet per year. Now, I'm here to say  
17       that I want to help save the Sparta aquifer, I want to  
18       do whatever I can as an individual to save the Sparta  
19       aquifer. My problem is this, as a landowner I was  
20       told by the group who represents these people that I  
21       would lose my rights to my property, as far as the  
22       water is concerned, on, above, and below the surface;  
23       that I would be taxed at the rate of \$1.23 per  
24       thousand for any water I withdrew from my water well  
25       on my property; that I'd have to pay a 23-cent per  
26       thousand for any water that I took from my well; and  
27       that I would have a tax of 25 cents, this would be a  
28       tax on my spending, 25 tenths of a cent, I guess is  
29       what it is.

30            Now, this, to me, as the first gentleman who

1 spoke made reference to, is invading of my rights as a  
2 landowner and your rights as landowners. And if this  
3 comes to pass, what about our mineral rights? What  
4 about our trees? What about our grass? What about  
5 everything else we own? These people are trying to  
6 take something away from us that they have no right to  
7 take away from us. I have a real strong objection to  
8 it, and the people I can bring forth can also object  
9 to it.

10 My problem is that this is going to cost the  
11 average homeowner, if you let this go to pass, a  
12 minimum of \$5 per month or \$20 a month, it's according  
13 to how much water they use per month. This could cost  
14 the average household \$60 to \$240 a year. These  
15 people are interested in raising \$198 million over the  
16 next 25 years. Now, I have a problem with them using  
17 my water to raise \$198 million. I'm sorry.

18 Now, Lincoln Parish has a problem, there's no  
19 question about it, but they also have the right to  
20 draw water out of Lake D'Arbonne. They have that  
21 written into Lake D'Arbonne Commission when they set  
22 Lake D'Arbonne up, they have that right. Now, the  
23 reason they're not using the water out of Lake  
24 D'Arbonne is because they're going to have to pump it  
25 to Ruston, and because it's going to cost them  
26 additional money to make it potable. That is why  
27 they're so interested in taking your rights and my  
28 rights away from us. Thank you. I appreciate you.

29 MR. WALKER:

30 Do we have any questions from the Commission?

1 (No response.) All right.

2 Our next speaker is Wade Meade. Just for future  
3 reference, please don't pound on the podium because  
4 that's going to disrupt the recording, and really  
5 irritate our court reporter.

6 MR. MEADE:

7 We don't want to irritate the court reporter.  
8 I'm Wade Meade from Louisiana Tech, and while my Ph.D.  
9 is in ancient history and archeology, I do have a  
10 Bachelor's and a Master's in geology, and my Master's  
11 thesis was in Lincoln Parish, geology of Lincoln  
12 Parish. We certainly have a problem with groundwater  
13 in all the parishes, including Jackson. There has  
14 been a tremendous drop in the level of the Sparta for  
15 years now. One of the things that the application  
16 proposes to do is to develop more surface water.  
17 Another is to protect the recharge area. That's very,  
18 very important. Like in Austin, Texas, where the  
19 Edwards aquifer, they have very serious penalties,  
20 they have signs posted all over the area, almost have  
21 to have a permit to dig a post hole. So it's very  
22 important to protect the recharge area.

23 Now, one thing that we have not talked about, and  
24 John Michael might, is in the recharge area we can  
25 build ponds to help recharge faster and not depend  
26 upon rainwater. Piecemeal is not the way to save the  
27 Sparta aquifer. Local governments will not be able to  
28 do that. We all have to work together. Groundwater  
29 flows, it does not respect parish lines. Here in this  
30 area that depth of the Sparta is slightly to the east

1 -- or to the east and slightly to the south. It does  
2 not stop at the Ouachita Parish line.

3 I strongly support the application Mr. Durrett,  
4 he used to be, I think he was Durrett tonight, I  
5 strongly support this. Thank you very much.

6 MR. WALKER:

7 Do we have any questions from the Commission?

8 (No response.) Thank you, Mr. Mead.

9 Our next speaker is Mr. Robert Moore. Mr. Moore?

10 MR. MOORE:

11 I'm Robert Moore. I am parish president of the  
12 Jackson Parish Farm Bureau, and I'm a farmer. We, the  
13 Jackson Parish Farm Bureau Board of Directors is  
14 opposed to this. We do not believe that this is in  
15 the best interest of the parish or in the best  
16 interest of farmers. This will infringe upon property  
17 rights, and we do not believe that these powers should  
18 be given to an appointed board. We believe that any  
19 time that the authority to tax should be handed down  
20 it should be with elected officials that have some  
21 accountability to the public.

22 We do not believe that the problem, as previous  
23 speakers have stated, is as severe in Jackson Parish  
24 as is led to believe. There are Smurfit-Stone wells  
25 that have recharged as much as 20 to 30 feet as they  
26 have reduced their consumption. We believe that  
27 through a -- any time that you have a problem, your  
28 first method of addressing a problem should be through  
29 education and conservation. This does not appear to  
30 have been done through the Sparta plan. That is one

1 of the last areas that they addressed. It shows that  
2 Jackson Parish has addressed the use of water and we  
3 have dropped our level. If we -- if that was proposed  
4 across the board and all individuals would reduce  
5 their consumption, this would have a major impact upon  
6 the Sparta aquifer. And we believe that that and  
7 future studying and seeing how these wells recharge  
8 would be the first method that should be addressed  
9 before you start infringing on property owners' rights  
10 and assessing taxes. Thank you.

11 MR. WALKER:

12 Do we have any questions from the Commission?

13 (No response.) Thank you, Mr. Moore.

14 Our next speaker is Rick Godley.

15 MR. GODLEY:

16 My name is Rick Godley and I'm here representing  
17 my family. In the philosophical question, is the  
18 glass of water half full or half empty, someone with a  
19 positive outlook would say, well, it's half full.  
20 Well, someone with a negative outlook would say it's  
21 half empty. When it comes to the aquifer if we ask  
22 the same question, is the aquifer have full or is it  
23 half empty, who is the positive person, the one who  
24 says it's half full or the one who says it's half  
25 empty?

26 On behalf of myself and my family and the future  
27 of both, I respectfully request that you designate the  
28 Sparta aquifer as a critical designation so as to  
29 preserve the primary source of drinking water for  
30 north Louisiana. As we all know the state of

1 Louisiana has been richly blessed with tremendous  
2 natural resources, such as oil, natural gas, forest,  
3 rich soil and seafood, just to name a few. Likewise,  
4 we sit atop a large resource of fresh water that up  
5 until now is relatively unregulated. If we do not  
6 take the proper action now to have this source of  
7 freshwater protected, then we once again will stand in  
8 the future reflecting back on our past with regrets  
9 because we didn't seize the opportunity of the present  
10 to take positive steps.

11 You already know the alarming rate of the  
12 drawdown levels, the saltwater intrusion potentials,  
13 and the industrial stress. Please have the foresight  
14 today to say that there will be fresh water tomorrow.  
15 To that extent I recommend that you declare the Sparta  
16 aquifer a critical designation status. Sincerely,  
17 Rick Godley.

18 MR. WALKER:

19 Do we have any questions from the Commission? (No  
20 response.) Thank you, Mr. Godley.

21 Our next speaker will be John Broussard.

22 MR. BROUSSARD:

23 Yes, sir, I'm John David Broussard. I'm an  
24 international representative with the Paper, Allied  
25 Industrial and Chemical Workers International Union.  
26 I appreciate you allowing me to be here this  
27 afternoon. I represent about 3,000 families that make  
28 the highest pay rates in this part of the world, and  
29 we are concerned that what's happening here tonight  
30 can have a serious economic impact on their

1 livelihood, and not just theirs, the rest of the world  
2 here. We're talking very high-paying jobs, \$20 plus  
3 an hour. And you take that out of the stream in this  
4 area, and we're already suffering job losses, please  
5 consider this when you make your determination. Thank  
6 you.

7 MR. WALKER:

8 Do we have any questions? (No response.) All  
9 right, thank you, Mr. Broussard.

10 Our next speaker will be Olevia McDonald.

11 MS. MCDONALD:

12 I'm Olevia McDonald. I'm representing Stone  
13 Container Corporation in Hodge, Louisiana. The Stone  
14 Container Corporation Hodge, Inc. is committed to  
15 being responsible corporate citizens. We accept our  
16 role of being good stewards of the natural resources,  
17 water is no exception. It is a major consideration  
18 when projects are undertaken at our facility. The  
19 issue at hand is one of great importance to our  
20 facility, as our operation is dependent upon a secure  
21 water supply to sustain our existence. Without it we  
22 put 637 jobs and an economic impact of such at risk.

23 Our commitment to be responsible with our water  
24 management has been demonstrated throughout the years.  
25 A task force was formed and we began an aggressive  
26 program in the mill to reduce water pumpage from the  
27 Sparta aquifer in early 1997, without incentives. We  
28 have reduced water pumpage significantly over the past  
29 five years. Level of pumpage reflects at least an 8  
30 million gallons a day reduction. This has been

1 accomplished through numerous mill projects which have  
2 required both a commitment of human resources and  
3 money.

4 A Stone employee checks 12 water wells used by  
5 the facility daily. Well use is rotated with an  
6 average of 10 wells running daily. The rate is  
7 published daily and discussed in the production  
8 meetings held each morning. We are committed to  
9 allowing and supporting an employee to participate on  
10 the Sparta Commission and the Louisiana State Ground  
11 Water Task Force. The mill participates in the  
12 Department of Environmental Quality's Groundwater  
13 Protection Division, which was implemented in 1999,  
14 that studies water quality. We were an integral part  
15 of the Bi-State Sparta Coalition formed in 1997  
16 between Louisiana and Arkansas. We report our pumpage  
17 to USGS on a monthly basis.

18 The Hodge mill recognizes that it must be in a  
19 mode of continuous improvement, and pledges to be  
20 responsible in the use and conservation of  
21 groundwater. Notwithstanding, we want to make certain  
22 that our conservation efforts and reduction in usage  
23 are recognized by this Commission. These efforts  
24 began long before the Sparta study began. The Sparta  
25 study does not include all of our available data,  
26 specifically, the data pertaining to the wells used by  
27 our facility was not included. Subsequent to the  
28 initial study and upon our request, the Sparta  
29 Commission has taken this information and is currently  
30 having it applied to the model to determine impact.

1 But again, this pertinent information is not included  
2 in the study.

3 We encourage this Commission to base its decision  
4 on facts, a scientific approach should be followed in  
5 this process. Clearly, with the successes documented  
6 from our conservation efforts, which have already been  
7 undertaken and are underway, and the fact that all of  
8 the data has not been included in this study, it is  
9 inappropriate to declare Jackson and Bienville  
10 Parishes as critical at this time. Thank you.

11 MR. WALKER:

12 Do we have any questions from the Commission  
13 members? (No response.) Thank you, Ms. McDonald.

14 Our next speaker will be Bridger DeVille.

15 MR. DEVILLE:

16 I'm Bridger DeVille, and I represent myself as a  
17 citizen of Ruston and Lincoln Parish. I wasn't going  
18 to speak until I realized I'm probably the only  
19 representative of my generation here in this room and  
20 I would like for our voice to be heard in some sort,  
21 even if it's just mine. I lack the education on this  
22 topic to give the most qualified opinion as far as  
23 most people go in this room, but I would like to voice  
24 a strong -- I urge you to declare it -- gees, I'm  
25 getting so nervous I already forgot the word -- yes,  
26 critical, yes, thank you. This is why I should have  
27 waited 20 or 30 years before I got up here and did  
28 this. I urge you to declare it critical because in 20  
29 or 30 years it is going to be me and my generation in  
30 this room, and I hope that we don't have to have the

1 same conversations. And I hope that the situation is  
2 better, and I see it as the simplest view as -- you  
3 know, I commend everyone that's done all their hard  
4 work at Stone Container and everything to make the  
5 problems better, and at other plants, but a good  
6 student doesn't make the entire class smart.

7 I think if there is regulation, I think those  
8 that are already doing well will have no problem  
9 meeting the regulations. I think that it should be  
10 regulated by elected officials, though, and I think  
11 that would be the truly democratic way to do this from  
12 a child's perspective, I guess, in the room, and from  
13 the snickers I'm sure it's taken lightly, but take it  
14 the way you will. Thank you.

15 MR. WALKER:

16 Do we have any questions? (No response.) Thank  
17 you, Mr. DeVille.

18 Our next speaker will be Charles Johnston.

19 MR. JOHNSTON:

20 I am Charles Johnston. I don't know whether I  
21 should say what parish I'm from or not. I'm going to  
22 just say I'm from Cadeville. If anybody don't know  
23 where Cadeville is, I'm safe. But if you think I'm  
24 from Ouachita, I'm not. Since we are the largest user  
25 of water out of the Sparta, and I hope that it is more  
26 people from Ouachita, and Mike Wallsworth was here, I  
27 don't know what meeting he had to go to that was more  
28 important than this, but I will ask him. Unless he  
29 had to meet somebody in the hospital, that may be more  
30 important. But I also represent the cattlemen because

1 I am the vice president of about five of these  
2 parishes in this Sparta.

3 We as cattlemen use overhead water, most of us,  
4 like, ponds, creeks, I have three ponds on my place.  
5 My cattle drink out of the ponds, overhead water. And  
6 I hope the Commission does not take that right away  
7 from me. God gives me that water, nobody else, God  
8 gives it to me. I don't have to pay for it, Jesus  
9 paid for it. I'm not going to preach, but he's the  
10 reason we have what we here have today, all the  
11 resources. And I hope that you do not take away the  
12 conservation rights of the oil, gravel, trees, all the  
13 minerals of the landowner, because our ancestors where  
14 my wife inherited part of this property that we own,  
15 her folks worked for that. But I understand that  
16 Ouachita is in problem, has trouble. Riverwood, or  
17 Manville now, is one of the largest users of the  
18 water.

19 Somebody was talking about what kind of degrees  
20 they had awhile ago. I don't have a Ph.D. or anything  
21 like that, I have a CHS, that's common horse sense,  
22 and I know like the man was saying about the cup with  
23 all the straws in it, if you keep sucking out of the  
24 straw don't put anything back in it, you gonna empty  
25 it. Manville is one of the largest users of water.  
26 We are sitting in the middle of Ouachita Parish with  
27 the Ouachita River coming through it. We need to use  
28 the resources out of Ouachita River. Also, there's  
29 been some talk, and I served some two years on the  
30 Police Jury, about getting Caney Lake built. The

1 parish owns that. We could have some overhead water  
2 there, but it's sort of like the bridge that's going  
3 across the Ouachita River, everybody wants it, but  
4 nobody wants to step out and say where they want it.  
5 But remember this, like the young man was talking  
6 about, our future generation depends on the Sparta,  
7 not us, not my age. I could live to be 150, still be  
8 water there. But remember this, please do not take  
9 our resources away from us. Thank you.

10 MR. WALKER:

11 Any questions by the Commission? (No response.)  
12 Thank you, Mr. Johnston. We're going to take a break,  
13 say about 10 minutes now.

14 (BREAK)

15 MR. WALKER:

16 We'll pick back up with Carla Roberts.

17 MS. ROBERTS:

18 Thank you so much, Commission members and members  
19 of the public. I'm Carla Roberts, I'm the attorney  
20 for Senator James David Cain and the Senate  
21 Environmental Quality Committee. Many of you remember  
22 when we were here a couple of years ago, and we  
23 conducted the first of the Senate Environmental  
24 Quality Committee hearings on this very subject, and  
25 it's nice to see a lot of friendly faces again.

26 Senator Cain actually intended to be here tonight  
27 to speak to you all; however, his wife was in a little  
28 accident on their ranch. As many of you know, he's in  
29 the business of farming and ranching, and so there's  
30 some inherent risk in that business, as many of you

1 know. So nothing serious, but she's going to be  
2 bedridden until the end of the week, probably, so  
3 unfortunately he wasn't able to make it here tonight.

4 He asked me to thank you all for coming and to  
5 let you all know that he's still concerned about the  
6 issue and wants to point that out to you, that he's  
7 still involved and still monitoring the Commission and  
8 everything that's going on. He asked me specifically  
9 to point out and to thank all the people who've done  
10 so much to conserve water and the water resources  
11 which put us in a better place than we were three  
12 years ago when we started with the statewide committee  
13 hearings on groundwater, particularly Smurfit-Stone.  
14 The fact that they voluntarily were able to cut 8  
15 million gallons of water per day tells you that some  
16 people do have a lot of, I think it was CHS, common  
17 horse sense, or something like that, that a lot of  
18 people do and are willing to make that effort. Also,  
19 Squires Creek Golf Course, which was built by a group  
20 of businesspeople from here, including James Davidson,  
21 they constructed some reservoir ponds to use waste  
22 water to water the golf course, which is wonderful.  
23 They're not drawing from the aquifer, they're not  
24 taking valuable resources.

25 Duke Energy had decided not to put their plant  
26 here in part because they realized the concern that  
27 the community had over the lack of groundwater  
28 availability in the area. We also saw CLECO in the  
29 Eunice area agree to build some retention ponds so  
30 that they would cut out water in the Chicot, and

1 certainly the Chicot is not nearly in as great a  
2 stress as you all are, but there are groups of people  
3 who are coming together who recognize that there are  
4 some problems and who are working toward getting  
5 valuable solutions.

6 He wanted me to also remind you all that anytime  
7 you have a problem like this, there's always going to  
8 be differences of opinion, but the fact that everybody  
9 gets together in a room like this means there's a  
10 possibility to work out those differences together for  
11 the good of the state. I want to thank you all for  
12 your time and attention, and hopefully the next  
13 meeting Senator Cain can be here to do this instead of  
14 me.

15 MR. WALKER:

16 Thank you, Ms. Roberts. Our next speaker is  
17 going to be Jim Lee. Mr. Lee?

18 MR. LEE:

19 My name is Jim Lee. I retired to Jackson Parish  
20 two years ago to live on Caney Lake, and up until  
21 about a year ago Sparta was not in my vocabulary. But  
22 I'd like to present some facts that may or may not  
23 have been presented so far. Fact 1: the engineering  
24 firm doing the Sparta study did not use rainfall data  
25 in any of their conclusions. Fact 2: the engineering  
26 firm drew an imaginary line at the Arkansas-Louisiana  
27 border, and assumes that nothing southern Arkansas  
28 does or doesn't do affects the Sparta aquifer. Fact  
29 3: the firm doing the study did not seek available  
30 data from the Jackson Parish Watershed District

1 concerning the viability of using surface water from  
2 Caney Lake. Fact 4: the economy of Jackson Parish  
3 centers around two things, the Smurfit-Stone paper  
4 mill and Caney Lake. Proposals by the Sparta  
5 Commission put the continued viability of the paper  
6 mill and the Caney Lake State Park at risk. Fact 5:  
7 from July 21st of 2002 until November 5th of 2002,  
8 Caney Lake was 8 to 15" below pool stage with no water  
9 leaving the spillway. Fact No. 6: the Jackson Parish  
10 Watershed District, the Jackson Parish Police Jury,  
11 and the majority of Jackson Parish citizens are  
12 against the critical groundwater designation for  
13 Jackson Parish.

14 The Louisiana Ground Water Commission has a grave  
15 decision to make. I urge you to respect Jackson  
16 Parish residents' wishes and deny the critical  
17 groundwater designation for Jackson Parish, and  
18 abandon any proposals for Caney Lake. Thank you.

19 MR. WALKER:

20 Do we have any questions for Mr. Lee from the  
21 commission? (No response.) All right, thank you, Mr.  
22 Lee.

23 Our next speaker is going to be Travis Tinsley.

24 MR. TINSLEY:

25 Commission members, Mr. Walker, and interested  
26 public, I'm Travis Tinsley. I represent a committee  
27 of water resources concerns in Claiborne and Webster  
28 Parish, including the Claiborne Parish Watershed  
29 District Commission, Claiborne Parish Police Jury,  
30 Claiborne Parish Water Resources Committee, Webster

1 Parish Water Alliance, the Webster Parish Water  
2 Management District, and three members of the Sparta  
3 Groundwater Conservation District Commission, that  
4 have all been involved in intensive discussions about  
5 the application under consideration.

6 Claiborne Parish and Webster Parish interests  
7 unanimously concur that application under  
8 consideration submitted by the Sparta Groundwater  
9 Conservation District Commission should be acted upon  
10 with the following changes. Relative to boundaries,  
11 we believe that whatever criteria are used to  
12 designate the critical area should continue to be  
13 applied uniformly throughout the area of the state of  
14 Louisiana subtended by the aquifer; that whatever we  
15 do in the critical area designated parishes is going  
16 to affect other portions of the aquifer that are not  
17 designated, and that those criteria should be  
18 applicable to protect everybody.

19 Relative to management controls, we believe that  
20 the aquifer should be managed by a publicly controlled  
21 agency with decisions that are subject to the approval  
22 of authorities of the parishes affected, just like in  
23 the Arkansas examples, in the model that seems to be  
24 working well. The counties in Arkansas have a voice  
25 in those decisions.

26 All parish proposals for water management should  
27 be considered by the managing agency, and should be  
28 selected only after objective rating on the technical  
29 merits. The agency should be responsible for making  
30 the most cost-effective arrangements for surface water

1 supplies necessary to supplement the capacity of the  
2 aquifer and to facilitate its recharge.

3 The managing agency should be provided with  
4 dependable, continuing revenue to cover the costs that  
5 include qualified technical staff to assess  
6 engineering options. Management should be structured  
7 to recognize that there are distinct areas of concern  
8 from parish to parish in the aquifer.

9 And we object to the application in its present  
10 form without these changes because we believe that it  
11 addresses only the most immediate part of the problem,  
12 and we're concerned that this approach would defer, or  
13 complicate a more permanent long-range solution that  
14 would be in the best interest of the water users in  
15 north Louisiana. Thank you very much.

16 MR. WALKER:

17 Do we have any questions from the commission?

18 (No response.)

19 All right, thank you, Mr. Tinsley. Our next  
20 speaker is James Michael. Mr. Michael?

21 MR. MICHAEL:

22 My name is James Robert Michael. I'm the retired  
23 director of Louisiana Tech's business and economic  
24 research division. When I was down there in the early  
25 1980s, we made a study of the Sparta aquifer. That  
26 study group consisted of a number of professors from  
27 the college of engineers, people from life sciences,  
28 bacteriology, the chemistry department, and, of  
29 course, I represented the economic part of it. We  
30 looked at all the options then, and I can truthfully

1 say, the only thing that's changed about the Sparta  
2 aquifer is that it's now about 35-40' lower than it  
3 was when we made our study in the 1980s. I found out  
4 at the time we made the study that our findings were  
5 no different from what another Tech group had found  
6 out in the 1950s, that the aquifer was going down,  
7 that you could not sustain the rate of withdrawals  
8 that we had.

9 I wish to goodness that we could have talked some  
10 public agency into sponsoring this project then, we  
11 were unable to do so and we were unable to get anymore  
12 research money. There was a strong indication from  
13 the model that was in existence then that the Sparta  
14 was in equilibrium. I had reservations. I said we  
15 don't have much margin for error. But differences of  
16 opinion and we were unable to act. One thing that  
17 made me a little bit timid was, if you'll think back,  
18 that was when the AIDS scare first came out, and I did  
19 not want to inject into the Sparta the possibility of  
20 AIDS being there for future generations.

21 I'd like to go over with you right now what we  
22 found then, and we've gone back and updated it, and  
23 the situation is not changed, the technology has  
24 improved greatly. There is a problem with the Sparta.  
25 If something isn't done it's going to continue to go  
26 down. I am emphatically in favor of action to save  
27 the Sparta. Now, I'm going to tell you something  
28 that's going to shock everybody in this auditorium.  
29 The problem is solvable, the technology is there, the  
30 resources are there and the resources are in a place

1 where they can be used to solve the Sparta problem.

2 Let me give you an example. There are two ways,  
3 other than piping surface water to the various  
4 destinations, that you can help that Sparta aquifer.  
5 One is through augmenting the recharge process without  
6 crop flooding. The other is by injection wells. Now,  
7 I happen to have been working, because I live in  
8 Claiborne Parish, with Claiborne Parish and Webster  
9 Parish. We have Dorcheat Bayou running by Minden that  
10 flows 200 million gallons a day of water that is  
11 usable. We have, right next to Dorcheat Bayou, those  
12 abandoned gravel pits, which are nothing but outcrops  
13 of the Sparta aquifer. Over the years silt has  
14 settled in on the top of it and that needs to be  
15 cleaned off, but all you'd have to do then is the  
16 recharge of the Sparta from that area would be to doze  
17 the silt off of the top and divert the water from  
18 Dorcheat a few feet. It runs right up next to that.  
19 Then there are numerous places up and down Dorcheat  
20 Bayou which are also outcrops of the Sparta aquifer.

21 Over in Claiborne Parish we have an area that's  
22 called Flat Lick. It's a five-mile diameter circle  
23 west of the Homer oilfield, it is an outcrop of the  
24 Sparta aquifer. Flat Lick Creek running through that  
25 aquifer, runs about 8 and a half billion gallons of  
26 water a year. Right now, because that land is silted  
27 over, after 80 years of drainage from the oilfield,  
28 oil, salt, everything else you can imagine, it only, I  
29 think Ben Magee told me, about one to three inches per  
30 year get into the aquifer from there. That needs to

1 be cleaned out.

2 Then in addition to that, there is a creek called  
3 Buck Creek which runs within a quarter of a mile of  
4 the basin that we're talking about, and Buck Creek  
5 lies at a higher elevation than Flat Lick Creek does.  
6 It wouldn't take a genius to figure out how to divert  
7 the water from Buck Creek into Flat Lick Lake, then  
8 we'd have about 14.5 billion gallons a year to work on  
9 getting into the Sparta aquifer. We can't get it all,  
10 but we could do it.

11 The other thing is that Lake Claiborne, the jewel  
12 of all lakes in Louisiana, and I'll fight anybody who  
13 argues with me on that, Lake Claiborne flows on a 365-  
14 day basis an average of 62 million gallons of water a  
15 day. That water is almost drinkable as it is. Now,  
16 it can be filtered, and we have a scheme for filtering  
17 it after it goes over the dam, we don't want to  
18 interfere with the landowners' rights around the dam.  
19 But we could go four miles down Darbonne Creek, where  
20 they originally planned on having -- where they were  
21 going to have an alternative dam site for Lake  
22 Claiborne, and line that creek bed with rocks, big  
23 rocks, small rocks, gravel, and maybe even some  
24 vegetation and further surface filter that. It's  
25 almost certain that it would be drinkable at that  
26 point. If it's not and if it's injected into the  
27 Sparta, the upper few feet of the Sparta are going to  
28 take care of the germs that are in it. And then I've  
29 been told that the bacteria will not live without  
30 oxygen down in the Sparta aquifer, and if it gets by

1 that stumbling block they won't survive in the human  
2 stomach. But, we're not going to consider putting  
3 anything in the Sparta that is not safe when we put it  
4 in there.

5 But we have 62 million gallons a day of water to  
6 play with from Lake Claiborne, and D'Arbonne Creek,  
7 that clean water from Claiborne goes into Lake  
8 D'Arbonne, and we can do some of this downstream  
9 there. We could make a number of injection wells,  
10 which are very, very inexpensive, and we would not  
11 pump water into the ground, we would let gravity, the  
12 weight of a 100-200' column of water, spread it as it  
13 gets into the aquifer. But we could put any number of  
14 million gallons of water into the Sparta through  
15 injection wells, and that would be one-third of the  
16 way between the present outcrop over in Bossier,  
17 Bienville, Webster parishes and Monroe. It won't take  
18 then 100 years to get from the outcrop to Monroe, it  
19 will be one-third of the way there. We could go  
20 further downstream on D'Arbonne and do the same thing  
21 and it will be nearly two-thirds of the way. So we  
22 have the capability of putting water into the Sparta  
23 in the outcrop area and throughout the length and  
24 breadth of the aquifer.

25 I am particularly concerned about jumping on this  
26 thing immediately because two of the problems we're  
27 facing is as that water level in the aquifer has sunk,  
28 some of the clay and rock -- clay and sand formations  
29 in there have dewatered. I'm told by the geologist  
30 that if they completely de-water it would take 1,000

1 years, if ever, we could re-water those clays. We  
2 don't want to run that risk any longer than we have  
3 to. In addition to that, the weight of about probably  
4 an average of 200' of ground on top of the top of the  
5 aquifer is tending to compress that aquifer. As the  
6 top of the aquifer falls you will never get to raise  
7 it back up to its present capacity. To me it's  
8 imperative that we get at it as soon as possible, and  
9 that we keep those clays from further dewatering and  
10 we maintain the capacity of the aquifer as it is.

11 How expensive is it. We've made some rough  
12 calculations, less than 10 cents per thousand gallons,  
13 if everybody in the aquifer were to pay for that. Is  
14 it something that we have to do all or nothing, no, we  
15 don't have to do it all. Suppose the people in  
16 Webster Parish were to decide, we want to do a small  
17 pilot project here. Let's flood 40 acres or 160  
18 acres, clean it off, put the water on there and just  
19 see if it goes into the aquifer. We know it will.  
20 Then have some measuring devices downdip from that to  
21 see exactly how fast they flow. Thank you.

22 MR. WALKER:

23 Do we have any questions for Mr. Michael? (No  
24 response.) Our next speaker is T.E. Gene Coleman.  
25 Mr. Coleman?

26 MR. COLEMAN:

27 My name is T.E. Gene Coleman, and I represent the  
28 Claiborne Parish Police Jury on the Sparta Commission  
29 that I serve as vice president of. One of the things  
30 that I would like to clarify, and I think I have

1 clarified this with our secretary on the Sparta  
2 Commission, is that the Meyer, Meyer, LaCroix and  
3 Hixson report that defined the Sparta aquifer as  
4 critical area was approved by the Sparta aquifer  
5 commission, but other sections of that report that  
6 have to do with management control and solutions have  
7 not been accepted by the Sparta Commission and have  
8 not been acted on by the Sparta Commission, and  
9 therefore I would appreciate it if you would ignore  
10 those recommendations until the review by the Sparta  
11 Commission has been completed and there acted upon.

12 The other thing that I would like to say is that  
13 one of the things that I've heard here in a good 'ole  
14 southern tradition is that people respect property  
15 rights, rights of any kind. And I am strongly in  
16 favor of doing some things like Arkansas did where  
17 they have counties that have a great deal to say about  
18 what is done with the water in their area, and I  
19 strongly believe that parishes, the parish police  
20 juries, should be authorized to also have parish-wide  
21 water districts, and those parish-wide water districts  
22 should be allowed to enter into cooperative endeavor  
23 agreements with adjoining parishes to come up with  
24 agreeable solutions for the whole areas that are  
25 involved.

26 One of the things that I think is that when  
27 things are done voluntarily they are much better  
28 accepted than they are if we have this top-down where  
29 somebody from way away is trying to tell us how to  
30 handle local problems that we may feel like that we're

1 more close to and that one shoe does not fit all  
2 situations. And so I would appreciate it very much if  
3 y'all in your deliberations and recommendations could  
4 come to workable solutions that would involve the  
5 parishes themselves having some authority, having  
6 authority to create water management districts within  
7 their boundaries, and allow those parishes to enter  
8 into agreements with other parishes to implement  
9 whatever programs that would be satisfactory. Thank  
10 you.

11 MR. WALKER:

12 Do we have any questions from the Commission?  
13 (No response.) Thank you, Mr. Coleman. Our next  
14 speaker is Robin Bridges.

15 MR. BRIDGES:

16 Thank you, Commission. My name is Robin Bridges  
17 and I've been asked to speak as part of the Webster  
18 Claiborne contingent here tonight. I am a county  
19 agent, a parish agent with the LSU Ag center, and my  
20 goal tonight is to encourage the Commission no matter  
21 what process is developed to include in that process  
22 increased funding or funding available to continue and  
23 expand the public education and awareness process.

24 In my capacity as a county agent and as a member  
25 of the LSU Ag center water resources education team  
26 over the last three years I have spoken to literally  
27 thousands of people in five of the ten Sparta aquifer  
28 parishes; whether it be a garden club, a day lily  
29 society, a civic group, like Lions, Kiwanis or  
30 Civitan, a youth group, like a 4-H group or school

1 classroom groups, every one of the people that I have  
2 spoken to without fail have understood and agreed  
3 based on the scientific data that's been presented by  
4 USGS and by Meyer, Meyer, Hixson and LaCroix, that we  
5 do have a problem, the Sparta aquifer is declining,  
6 and they each one pledge to do their best to reduce  
7 their use, their individual use of water. So water  
8 conservation is key. But I'm very sorry to say that,  
9 obviously, the word has not gotten out to everyone and  
10 we still need to develop and expand an education  
11 program if no matter what process is chosen it's going  
12 to be successful. Thank you for your time.

13 MR. WALKER:

14 Do we have any questions from the Commission?  
15 (No response.) Thank you, sir. Representative  
16 Daniel, I know that you passed earlier. Would you  
17 like to have an opportunity, because I know you have a  
18 long way to drive tonight. Representative William  
19 Daniel.

20 REPRESENTATIVE DANIEL:

21 Thank you. I asked to get back up here because I  
22 have to get my kids up at 6:30 in the morning tomorrow  
23 to go to school, and I thought if I left right after I  
24 gave this speech I might get there just in time. It's  
25 a long way to Baton Rouge. Senator Jones, I have a  
26 lot of respect for the way you drive back and forth.

27 Commissioner Gautreaux said that this was a first  
28 in Louisiana for the meeting of the Ground Water  
29 Commission to consider a critical area. It's a first  
30 in more than one way because it's the first time I

1 think that Louisiana has been proactive in addressing  
2 a situation, and I mean by that that most of the time  
3 when we're in the Legislature looking at something  
4 we're in crisis mode rather than addressing a  
5 situation before there's actually a serious problem.  
6 So I think it's a very good discussion we're having  
7 here tonight.

8 I was the author of this bill, and that doesn't  
9 mean that I sat down and wrote it, because I'm  
10 certainly not competent enough to do that, but that I  
11 had some really good people helping me here in the  
12 audience tonight write this, and I had a lot of input  
13 from people around the state. And as the author I  
14 guess sort of the buck stops with me, so when we're  
15 considering this I would like to tell you at least  
16 what I thought the legislative intent was when I  
17 drafted this piece of legislation.

18 As Karen mentioned, the bill was really set up to  
19 solve two distinct problems. First of all, we wanted  
20 to craft a long-term policy for the state of  
21 Louisiana, and I think that's being done; and the  
22 second was to address any kind of critical problem  
23 that we thought was occurring that might pose a safety  
24 issue or a health issue to the people of Louisiana.  
25 Now, when we talked about critical areas I can  
26 guarantee you that the legislative intent was not to  
27 address large areas. We thought that would be part of  
28 the long-term solution. When I explained this bill in  
29 committee and when I explained it on the House floor I  
30 explained it as wells that were in jeopardy.

1           When we talk about the Sparta aquifer no one can  
2 deny that it's a serious issue and it's certainly  
3 something that we need to address, and I looked at the  
4 plan presented by the Sparta Commission and I noticed  
5 the first thing on there is regulation; they called it  
6 management, I call it regulation. I think my idea and  
7 the idea of the Legislature when we looked at this,  
8 and if you'll look in the bill we discussed it,  
9 conservation first, incentive second, regulation  
10 distant third. In fact, we put this in the Office of  
11 Conservation to use their technical staff for  
12 precisely that reason because they were experts in  
13 conserving the natural resources of the state;  
14 conservation again. Regulation should be the final  
15 act, and I think the Legislature is to be commended  
16 for not rushing out and setting up an Office of Water  
17 Conservation and empowering it to do a bunch of  
18 things.

19           Finally, I would like to say that the Legislature  
20 did not grant the Sparta Commission or any other  
21 agency to regulate, tax, or otherwise manage water in  
22 this aquifer. The Ground Water Management Commission  
23 was given limited authority to do some of these things  
24 only to address a critical need. And I believe that  
25 Louisiana was blessed with abundant supplies of water,  
26 and I think our water is going to play a major role in  
27 the future economic health of the state. One thing  
28 I've learned in this, and I'm an engineer, is that  
29 it's certainly easier to bring people to water than it  
30 is to bring water to people, and a state blessed with

1 as much water as we have is going to attract a lot of  
2 people, and when you attract a lot of people that  
3 means a lot of jobs and a lot of economic prosperity  
4 for our state. But I think we need to address the  
5 Sparta in the context of conservation, initiatives,  
6 and if we have to very far down the line regulation in  
7 such a way as we balance the use of water for future  
8 generations and economic prosperity for our state, and  
9 that's the jobs of the existing industries that are  
10 here.

11 So as the author of the bill I wanted to tell you  
12 what I thought about when I was writing it and  
13 drafting it so that you'll know that what we were  
14 thinking in the Louisiana Legislature. And I thank  
15 you for your time.

16 MR. WALKER:

17 Thank you, Representative Daniel. The next  
18 speaker will be Reggie G. Skains. Mr. Skains? Not  
19 seeing him we'll move on. George Jacob?

20 MR. JACOB:

21 My name is George Jacob. I'm here representing  
22 Bienville Parish Police Jury. But who I'd like to  
23 really speak to you in behalf of are the several water  
24 systems that I've worked for for 17 years in Bienville  
25 and Natchitoches parishes. I have in that time seen  
26 water quality and quantity go down in every system, in  
27 every groundwater system, be it Sparta or Wilcox or  
28 what other aquifer, but especially in the Sparta.  
29 Right now I have one well that the water levels are  
30 below the pumps in water systems at Caster, Louisiana.

1 I have another well that I've lost at the village of  
2 Saline, and in the last two years I've lost two wells  
3 in the Sparta in the northern edge of Natchitoches  
4 parish due to water levels dropping below the pumps.  
5 At this point my remaining only well at this system  
6 the water level was at the top of the pumps in August  
7 last year. So these people think this is pretty  
8 critical right now I imagine. I know I do.

9 There's been a lot of talk tonight about Jackson  
10 Parish wanting out of this deal. Well, I don't think  
11 that you can cut any part out of this body and it  
12 still live. There's a lot of Jackson Parish, Smurfit-  
13 Stone has done a very good job dropping its water  
14 consumption, but I don't see how we can cut Jackson  
15 Parish loose without cutting the consumption that they  
16 pull from Bienville Parish that would drop our  
17 numbers, because a large portion of Jackson Parish  
18 water comes from Bienville Parish. And I would like  
19 to see some police jury control over the water  
20 districts, if it's possible, and I would like to see  
21 the Sparta declared critical. Thank you.

22 MR. WALKER:

23 Does the Commission have any questions? (No  
24 response.) Thank you, sir. Our next speaker is Jane  
25 Stephenson.

26 MS. STEPHENSON:

27 Hi. I'm Jane Stephenson, and I'm a Lincoln  
28 Parish resident. And I'm also -- I've been a member  
29 of the League of Women Voters since 1972, and I think  
30 every ten years we would have a meeting which would

1 concern the Sparta sands, and I think I saw that  
2 article you were talking about from the '50s, and each  
3 one of our meetings we would have people from Tech and  
4 engineers and people from the state who gave really  
5 good lessons, and they all concluded that we were in a  
6 critical period right then. And I have -- I'm a  
7 saver, and this is a newspaper from 1977. You can see  
8 it's very old and it's yellow, but it has a discussion  
9 by a very young Nancy Bergeron, and we're talking  
10 about all of the things that we're talking about  
11 today, we talked about then. And I was very  
12 frustrated when we first started with this Sparta  
13 Commission because we were going to have to study it  
14 again, and I would like to speak -- I speak for the  
15 league a little bit, we didn't really actually meet  
16 and vote on this, but we have reached a consensus many  
17 times that we are in a problem, and Lincoln Parish is  
18 probably in the biggest problem because we have no  
19 river.

20 So I would hope that you would declare it  
21 critical. We think it's critical, and I speak for the  
22 future generations. Bridger DeVille spoke for  
23 himself, but I'm speaking for my grandchildren, and  
24 all of your grandchildren need water, and we all need  
25 water. And so please, I think we can all work  
26 together if we have a better -- the biggest resource  
27 we have are our people, and I know, I know we can work  
28 together. I hope and I pray we can work together.

29 Thank you.

30 MR. WALKER:

1 Any questions by the Commission? (No response.)

2 Thank you, Ms. Stephenson.

3 Our next speaker will be Bobby Price.

4 MR. PRICE:

5 Thank you. My name is Bobby Earl Price. I'm a  
6 member of the Sparta Groundwater Commission. I'm also  
7 a retired professor from Louisiana Tech, Department of  
8 Civil Engineering. My background is water resources.  
9 I taught water resources over there for several years,  
10 for 32 years. Also was director of the Water  
11 Resources Center at Louisiana Tech.

12 I've had the opportunity to work with some of  
13 these studies that have been going on at Louisiana  
14 Tech over the years; in fact, the ones that were  
15 mentioned this evening. I do know that every year  
16 that we have looked at it the Sparta has been a major  
17 concern. It still is. We're looking at an  
18 opportunity right now of trying to do something to  
19 save the Sparta. We may not have this opportunity  
20 again. We've looked at it every 10 or 15 years and  
21 somebody says, well, let's do something about it, and  
22 then somebody says, no, let's just hold off, we got  
23 plenty of water.

24 As has already been mentioned the declines in the  
25 Sparta has been pretty well consistent over the years,  
26 but it is going down. A lot of people have indicated  
27 that we have a thickness of the Sparta and we have  
28 plenty of water in it. I would remind you that the  
29 water level in the Sparta is already below the top of  
30 the Sparta aquifer itself. As long as that water

1 continues to decrease in level, then the compaction of  
2 the sands in the Sparta makes it even harder to get  
3 other water out of it.

4 So we're looking at a critical situation right  
5 now. It may not be that it will be running dry the  
6 next year or two or three or four or five, but we've  
7 got to do something in the future. Even if we started  
8 at the present time trying to do something, it would  
9 probably be something like eight to nine to ten years  
10 down the road before something can be done. We need  
11 to get the Sparta back to an equilibrium where it can  
12 supply the economic benefits that we need for this  
13 area. A combination of whatever, of surface water,  
14 groundwater, whatever it may be, is needed to do it.  
15 This is a time to start. It's not a time to haggle  
16 over different things. It's time to come to some kind  
17 of conclusion that we can do something with the  
18 Sparta.

19 I've heard a lot of maybe concerns, complaints,  
20 everything else this evening, and I'm sure that  
21 they're all well grounded by the people who are making  
22 their comments, but it is time for us to look at the  
23 concept of a critical groundwater area, and also the  
24 public education, as was mentioned, in order for us to  
25 do something with the Sparta. I think the critical  
26 groundwater area designation is a good, strong  
27 beginning point. It encompasses the entire Sparta.  
28 When I say that I'm talking about the effects on the  
29 entire Sparta. The critical area that was put into  
30 the study and to the request to the state groundwater

1 commission may not include all ground area of the  
2 Sparta but it does affect all of the Sparta, and I can  
3 assure you. I also happen to serve as chairman of  
4 the project committee for the Sparta Groundwater  
5 Commission, and I know that that Sparta project  
6 committee really did a very thorough job of trying to  
7 look at this and be consistent about what would be  
8 beneficial for the entire area. I hope that we will  
9 get on with the job. It's time to move and I think  
10 the starting of the critical groundwater area  
11 designation is the proper procedure. Thank you.

12 MR. WALKER:

13 Do we have any questions from the Commission?

14 (No response.) All right, thank you, Mr. Price.

15 Our next speaker is Sarah Lindblad.

16 MS. LINDBLAD:

17 Thank you. My name is Sarah Lindblad and I'm a  
18 resident of Ruston and Lincoln Parish. And I would  
19 like to thank the Commission, and I'd like to thank  
20 the Sparta Groundwater for all their hard work, I know  
21 it hasn't been easy.

22 Recently I've had the honor of working with a  
23 small group of dedicated citizens to stop the building  
24 of a merchant power plant that would use millions of  
25 gallons from our struggling aquifer. Although the  
26 plant has withdrawn its permit from Lincoln Parish,  
27 I'm not naive enough to believe that our efforts were  
28 100 percent the reason why. At best, we were able to  
29 postpone their decision long enough for them to hang  
30 themselves with their own rope.

1 I've learned a lot through this process. The  
2 most important was that of being powerless.  
3 Everywhere we turned there was no one to help, there  
4 was no law, legislation or designation to stop this  
5 giant from invading our community and using our  
6 valuable natural resources for little to no return.  
7 Progress and growth is very important to the area.  
8 With the endangered designation we can be picky and  
9 powerful and chose those industries and businesses  
10 that want to bring value to the community, not  
11 deplete. We can send a message to the prospective  
12 businesses that we value our community and we welcome  
13 you to become a part of it if you bring good things to  
14 the area.

15 Businesses that are progressive and smart, that  
16 can work to find alternatives to heavy water use will  
17 want to be part of an aggressive, smart community.  
18 What business would want to locate here when they feel  
19 that the citizens are not concerned about limited  
20 natural resources? Not one who is looking toward  
21 growth in the future. With the endangered designation  
22 we will have more choice, not less; more power, not  
23 less; and the knowledge that we have done the right  
24 thing for all in our community. We can be a shining  
25 example of citizens working together to find  
26 alternatives, not a tarnished one who lives in the  
27 past and does not plan for the future. Thank you.

28 MR. WALKER:

29 Any questions by the Commission? (No response.)  
30 Thank you.

1           Our next speaker is Patricia Jones. I don't see  
2 Ms. Jones coming forward, so we'll move on to John Van  
3 Bennett. I'm sorry, my apologies. Ms. Jones is on  
4 her way.

5 MS. JONES:

6           My name is Patricia Jones. I'm a resident of  
7 Lincoln Parish. I want to thank the Commission for  
8 coming to Ruston tonight. We appreciate the attention  
9 to our problem.

10          Everyone who lives, works or attends school in  
11 north Louisiana is dependent on the Sparta aquifer  
12 water to live. Our drinking water comes from the  
13 underground Sparta, and our aquifer has been reported  
14 to be losing capacity at an alarming rate. This is  
15 the reason that we're here tonight.

16          In 1984 the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled that  
17 our state Constitution contains a mandate for all  
18 agencies and officials in the state to ensure that  
19 their actions protect the important natural resources  
20 of the state, including all water. Article 9, Section  
21 1 of the Constitution states, the important natural  
22 resources of the state, including the air, water, and  
23 the helpful scenic, historic, and aesthetic qualities  
24 of the environment shall be protected, replenished,  
25 and restored as much as possible, consistent with the  
26 health, safety and welfare of the people.

27          Today there's some people in Louisiana who think  
28 that they can use as much water as they want, dump  
29 their waste into the water and no one can tell them  
30 what to do. With this attitude our important rivers,

1 streams, lakes, underground springs and aquifers are  
2 not protected for present and future generations. I  
3 believe that some of our officials here tonight may be  
4 asking the wrong questions. They want to know  
5 whether or not our aquifers are in danger, and if so  
6 what should be done. I believe that the more legally  
7 correct questions are: one, are we following the  
8 mandates of the Louisiana Constitution; two, are we  
9 making sure our resources will be available in both  
10 quality and quantity for present and future  
11 generations; three, are we letting a few individuals  
12 or corporations squander our important and valuable  
13 natural resources for their short-term economic gain.

14 Let's look at our state's protection for the  
15 environment that is already in place. Every major  
16 activity which results in the pollution of air and  
17 water in our state must get a permit from one or more  
18 state agency, like the Department of Environmental  
19 Quality, the Department of Natural Resources or the  
20 Public Service Commission. Some activities may also  
21 require permits from the Department of Wildlife and  
22 Fisheries, the Department of Transportation and  
23 Development, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

24 Any applicants for these permits and the state  
25 agencies involved are required to identify potential  
26 and real adverse impacts to human health and the  
27 environment from the proposed activity, and to ensure  
28 that every effort has been made to eliminate, reduce,  
29 and mitigate these adverse impacts. This includes  
30 showing that alternatives sites and alternative

1 projects have been considered, and that the most  
2 environmentally protective project and site have been  
3 selected. Every five years or so these facilities or  
4 activities must renew their permits, and the  
5 applicants and agencies must have an obligation to  
6 again look at the permit and ensure that everything is  
7 being done to protect human health and the  
8 environment.

9 Are these major water users being asked by our  
10 state agencies and officials to conserve or to justify  
11 their use of our groundwater? I don't think so. I  
12 believe that their permit applications and permit  
13 renewals are being rubber-stamped by these agencies  
14 with little attempt to protect our resources. Most of  
15 the big water users in our area can be found operating  
16 in other states. In almost every case they are  
17 operating with more stringent regulations of water  
18 than they are held to in Louisiana. Let me assure you  
19 that these industries I'm referring to make a profit  
20 in these other locations. Profit is just easier in  
21 Louisiana because industry can get cheaper natural  
22 resources.

23 Businesses in Louisiana can make a profit plus  
24 conserve and protect our most precious resource,  
25 water, if our state will ask them to do so. Large  
26 municipal water users need to conserve also and be  
27 aided in this by funding from the state. I believe  
28 that if applicants for projects which will adversely  
29 impact our important water resources were really  
30 following the Louisiana Natural Resources Protection

1 mandate we would not need to worry about our  
2 groundwater and surface water in north Louisiana.  
3 Because our agencies and officials have not followed  
4 the mandates to protect human health and the  
5 environment as identified by Louisiana Supreme Court,  
6 we are worried about the future of our important and  
7 threatened water resources.

8 I close by asking our state agencies and  
9 officials to do the job we've entrusted them to do and  
10 protect our water.

11 MR. WALKER:

12 Any questions by the Commission? (No response.)  
13 Thank you, Ms. Jones.

14 Our next speaker will be John Van Bennett. And  
15 incidentally, I had had a previous request for us to  
16 take a break about 9:00, so after Mr. Van Bennett,  
17 we're going to take about a five-minute break. Okay?

18 MR. VAN BENNETT:

19 Thank you. I'm from Union Parish. My name is  
20 Van Bennett. I'm president of the Union Parish  
21 Cattlemen's Association, vice president of the Union  
22 Parish Farm Bureau. I also serve as president of the  
23 Poultry Advisory Board with Con-Ag over there in  
24 Farmersville, and I work for Louisiana Ag Credit out  
25 of Arcadia. I operate the Farmersville office, and we  
26 have about 30 to 40 million in poultry loans in this  
27 area.

28 I didn't come here with a prepared speech  
29 tonight. I came here to listen, to try to find out  
30 the facts. It seems to me that that's something

1 that's lacking is the facts. A lot of the things that  
2 have been presented tonight may be facts. These are  
3 things that many of us haven't heard. Many of us were  
4 not aware of what was going on. You hear bits and  
5 pieces. They said they been working on this for five  
6 and a half years, they couldn't get more than 20  
7 people to the meeting. Has there been proper  
8 notification? Has there been -- did you want more  
9 than 20 people at the meeting? I represent  
10 agriculture, and agriculture in this part of the world  
11 is vital to our economy.

12 I respect all the people from Louisiana Tech who  
13 have gotten up here, very intelligent, eloquent  
14 speakers, but we've got some lay men, we've got some  
15 people in agriculture, poultry growers, cattlemen,  
16 they need to be heard. I question the representation  
17 of the board. I question that it hasn't had enough of  
18 our people, agricultural people that make their  
19 livelihoods from use of that water. They are good  
20 stewards of the land, they're environmental stewards,  
21 I'd say 95 percent of them are good stewards of the  
22 land. In anything you're going to find anybody that  
23 abuses the system, but the majority of the people in  
24 agriculture in our part of the world are good stewards  
25 of the land, good stewards of the natural resources.  
26 I think they need more representation on this board.  
27 Their voices need to be heard.

28 Also, the permitting process, I don't think this  
29 board should be allowed to handle the permitting  
30 process. No costs have been told to us, what it's

1 going to cost the landowner or the people in  
2 agriculture. Those facts need to be put out on the  
3 table. They don't need to be allowed to have a  
4 permitting process, and they say recommendation of  
5 50,000 gallons of water from the well per day, that's  
6 a recommendation; that's not a fact, that's a  
7 recommendation. That recommendation could change. It  
8 could change after the permitting process is approved.  
9 All the facts need to be laid out on the table prior  
10 to any approval process to allow this board to enact  
11 laws or taxes on the agricultural community.

12 We in agriculture take a back seat too often in  
13 this world today. We produce the food and fiber in  
14 this nation, and without us producing the food and  
15 fiber of this nation we wouldn't be as strong as we  
16 are today. We could be vulnerable just like we are in  
17 oil and gas. Everybody realizes we import 60 percent  
18 of our oil and gas from the Middle East. We can  
19 become vulnerable in agriculture just like we have in  
20 oil and gas.

21 What I'm saying is that we need more facts, we  
22 need proper representation by all, not just Lincoln  
23 Parish, not just Louisiana Tech, not just one parish,  
24 but proper representation from all parishes, from all  
25 segments, and I feel that we haven't got that. I'm  
26 asking that you decline declaring this a critical --  
27 the Sparta aquifer critical until we can get proper  
28 representation and get all the facts presented to all  
29 the people in our area. Thank you.

30 MR. WALKER:

1 Any questions by the Commission? (No response.)

2 All right, we're going to take a five-minute break.

3 (BREAK)

4 MR. WALKER:

5 If everybody will take a seat, our next speaker  
6 will be John Hays.

7 MR. HAYS:

8 I'm John Hays and I'm representing myself. I'm  
9 sure you all have heard that we all have our different  
10 economic interest, whether it's raising cattle,  
11 chickens, making paper bags, producing college  
12 students or whatever, but in this area we only have a  
13 single source of potable water, and that's the Sparta.  
14 We're using it for industrial purposes, that quality  
15 of water is not used anywhere else in the country.

16 Our representative that just left made a point of  
17 saying that it's easier to bring people to water than  
18 water to people. If you were to put it in a context  
19 that all of us see around here, if you were to take  
20 water to the paper mill and trucked it down there, Mr.  
21 Davis and his tank trucks would have to unload  
22 something between two and three a minute. The only  
23 alternative for those industrial processes, and  
24 surface water can be used for an industrial process,  
25 is in the limited surface water impoundments we have  
26 available.

27 I'm not an engineer. I was raised by a bunch of  
28 them. I contracted and am familiar with water  
29 treatment. We don't have a whole lot of surface water  
30 around here that's suitable to be treated to potable

1 standards. Now, Dr. Michaels and others alluded to  
2 studies back in the '50s, there's some other records  
3 of you might say studies that go back to the '20s when  
4 the city of Ruston or town of Ruston maybe then  
5 started using the Sparta water as its primary drinking  
6 water supply. Even back around 1920 it was a big  
7 expenditure to deepen some of those wells and lower  
8 some of those pumps.

9 I would encourage y'all to designate the critical  
10 status of the Sparta. Nothing in that report that was  
11 introduced to the deal is a mandated item that will  
12 occur. There's plenty of room for more discussion,  
13 but something needs to start. Thank you.

14 MR. WALKER:

15 Any questions from the Commission? (No  
16 response.) Thank you, Mr. Hays.

17 Our next speaker will be J.E. Mitcham.

18 MR. MITCHAM:

19 I'm J.E. Mitcham. I'm not an engineer, I'm not  
20 anything. I'm a musician by profession. I have a  
21 Master's degree in music, been raising peaches for 73  
22 years. I have an orchard up there for 60 years of  
23 several thousand trees, and still have about several  
24 thousand trees, about 100 acres and so forth. But I'm  
25 going to get mine over with real quick so that  
26 somebody else can have some time to talk.

27 All right, number one, there's a well right there  
28 within 100 yards of my peach orchard, and it was  
29 drilled in 1989, and 2001, January of 2001 it was 36'  
30 for -- the water level had gone down 36' in 12 years.

1 That's three feet a year. Well, you can say whatever  
2 you want to, but back yonder when I was in -- in 1931  
3 when I was in the eighth grade in school, teacher  
4 says, we have a new law we want you to learn about  
5 this weekend. When you come back Monday morning now I  
6 want you to know it. We came back Monday morning, we  
7 usually did what we did, we hunted with our slingshots  
8 and our air rifles and so forth. She says, what's the  
9 new law you learned this morning? She went around all  
10 over the room, about 35 of us, and nobody knew. She  
11 said, we'll stay in at recess and we'll learn it.  
12 Well, that new law, that new law is the thing that's  
13 giving us problems right today, water seeks its own  
14 level. Yeah.

15 Well, anyway, 12 years that my neighbor's has  
16 fallen 36'. Wells that were drilled on our place  
17 there, we have about 100 acres of peaches at one  
18 place, and we're putting in another 100 there on the  
19 other place there now, they were in '76 and '77 they  
20 were 6" wells. The quality of water was excellent.  
21 How many years is that? About 25, isn't it, about 25  
22 years. The quality of water was excellent. We had  
23 another well and so forth, we discarded it, we used it  
24 for domestic purposes. But anyway, we have only the  
25 two left now. The quality of these two wells we have  
26 now is awful. You can't even grow blueberries with  
27 the water that you have coming out of the water now.  
28 The quality of water is awful. All you have to do is  
29 just turn -- go out there to my place right now and  
30 mash this button and it will come out of there, but

1 it's just muddy and as muddy as it can be. It's  
2 fallen, it's gotten way down.

3 What have we done? Well, we have just put in a  
4 new irrigation system. We've put in a half a mile of  
5 4" line so we could get some city water because we  
6 can't drink the water that's coming out of the ground.  
7 The new irrigation system is going to be all electric,  
8 it has three big electric pumps getting the surface  
9 water. We've spent thousands and thousands of dollars  
10 trying to get it going. Folks, it's like this, you  
11 hear people say things, the people who know something  
12 who have told you something, there's two people who  
13 made a report tonight that you better listen to.  
14 That's one of them right over there, that's Bobby  
15 Price; and that other one just went to Haynesville, or  
16 Homer, one, because he comes by and gets peaches all  
17 the time from us, and the another one is that young  
18 man. They know a little bit about what's going on.

19 I want to tell you one other thing real quick.  
20 1924, '25, '20s and '30s, back there you could sit on  
21 my front porch out there from Summerfield and read the  
22 newspaper from the flares from the El Dorado oil  
23 field. We're right there with the water right now.  
24 Wake up. Pay now or really pay later. Wake up.  
25 Thank you.

26 MR. WALKER:

27 Any questions by the Commission? (No response.)  
28 All right, thank you, Mr. Mitcham.

29 Our next speaker is Cliff Arrington.

30 MR. MITCHAM:

1 I gave Cliff's report when I gave that well that  
2 was on my place -- that was within 100 yards from my  
3 peach orchard.

4 MR. WALKER:

5 Thank you very much. Our next speaker then will  
6 be Paul Washington.

7 MR. WASHINGTON:

8 I'm Paul Washington. I live here in Ruston and I  
9 teach geology, including groundwater hydrogeology at  
10 the undergraduate and graduate level over at ULM.  
11 It's nice to hear my colleagues at Tech are in favor  
12 of conserving groundwater.

13 I came to north Louisiana about eight years ago,  
14 and part of the reason was to teach groundwater at  
15 ULM, actually Northeast at that time, and very quickly  
16 I found that I was sitting right on top of a water  
17 problem, a groundwater problem. I have had students  
18 studying this problem, and yes, the Sparta is a  
19 problem. The Sparta is stressed, very stressed. Does  
20 that make it critical? What constitutes critical?  
21 Ultimately if nothing is done the Sparta will run out  
22 of usable water. It's just a matter of time. So the  
23 criticality is a question of when do you draw the line  
24 in time. It's not a question of whether we have a  
25 problem, it's just how serious at this moment do you  
26 consider it. As far as I'm concerned it's critical.  
27 It needs to be taken care of now because if we don't  
28 take care of it now we're going to have to take care  
29 of it later, and when we take care of it later it will  
30 cost more and it will be tougher to take care of.

1           Arguments that I've heard tonight are somewhat  
2 spurious, or actually fallacious in many cases.  
3 Property rights, where should we draw the boundaries  
4 for the critical designation. Should we exclude  
5 Jackson Parish which sits right in the middle of the  
6 aquifer. You can't exclude one part of an aquifer  
7 from the treatment that the whole aquifer is getting.  
8 As long as you are within the stressed part of the  
9 aquifer you've got to deal with the whole thing.  
10 Water doesn't respect property lines. Water doesn't  
11 respect boundary lines. It will flow across.  
12 Basically you are dealing with the issue that water  
13 will go to where it's been pumped out. If you allow  
14 Jackson Parish to pump without any control on it, they  
15 will pull water from what is now in Lincoln Parish,  
16 from what is in Bienville Parish, potentially even  
17 from what's in Ouachita Parish, though the gradient is  
18 pretty steep across that boundary towards Ouachita  
19 Parish, so it's unlikely that it will reverse that too  
20 badly unless something goes in there.

21           So basically it's time to take care of this  
22 problem. It's time to look at it as a scientific  
23 issue: it is stressed, it needs to be dealt with, it  
24 needs to be dealt with sooner rather than later, and  
25 you cannot draw a boundary that artificially breaks  
26 the stressed area in the middle. Thank you.

27 MR. WALKER:

28           Any questions by the Commission? (No response.)  
29 Thank you, Mr. Washington.

30           Our next speaker will be Ed L. Ashton or Aston.

1 All right, I don't see Mr. Aston. Our next speaker,  
2 I'm not sure I'm able to read this properly, John  
3 Lemay perhaps, lives on Georgia Avenue. Okay, Dennis  
4 Woodward?

5 MR. WOODWARD:

6 First of all I want to thank y'all for being  
7 here. I know y'all have a long drive, some of you,  
8 back to Baton Rouge or wherever you're from, and we do  
9 appreciate y'all being here, this is an important  
10 issue.

11 I am a civil engineer and I do have a Master's in  
12 Business Administration, but you have heard from  
13 professors from Louisiana Tech that are experts in  
14 groundwater and they know far more than I do about  
15 groundwater, and I've not heard one of them say that  
16 this is not a critical area, the Sparta. Every one of  
17 them has emphasized how critical it is. I am new to  
18 this area, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to  
19 figure out we have a barrel of water here and we're  
20 taking water out faster than we're putting water in,  
21 and the water at the bottom of the barrel is not as  
22 good as the water at the top of the barrel. And  
23 eventually you've got to do something, I mean, the  
24 water is going to run out, there's no question about  
25 that. And so we need to do something. And like I  
26 say, the barrel, everybody's drawing out of the same  
27 barrel. So you've heard that more eloquently from  
28 others, but simplistically it's easy to understand.

29 It seems like a lot of the opposition here  
30 tonight is based on misinformation, or a part of it is

1 based on the study that was done by Meyer, Meyer,  
2 LaCroix and Hixson, which is not a part of this  
3 application. The application is not asking to do some  
4 of the things that were listed as alternatives in that  
5 study. There is -- it's not asking for taxing  
6 authority, there wouldn't be a permitting fee to cover  
7 the cost of permitting; it's not asking to regulate  
8 any surface water, I think some people have objections  
9 on that basis, it's not asking for that; and it's not  
10 asking to regulate existing wells unless they're going  
11 to dramatically increase their outflow. So I mean, a  
12 lot of the concerns that I've heard tonight are not  
13 really what this application is about.

14 What the application does ask for is for  
15 incentives for businesses and for money to provide  
16 conservation education. Those are good things. I've  
17 worked with Trailblazers, we've been promoting that  
18 for a long time, it's a resource conservation and  
19 development organization. We've been promoting  
20 conservation. They have kits they give out and  
21 things. But I think incentives would be good for  
22 existing businesses, like your Stone Containers, I  
23 mean, they've voluntarily made reductions, but if you  
24 could provide incentives for them to increase that  
25 level of reduction, then I think that would be  
26 beneficial. And I don't see how anybody, even Stone,  
27 could argue with that if we're going to pay them more  
28 money to do what they're already doing, or to provide  
29 them with incentives to do that kind of thing.

30 What it does do, though, it helps regulate wells,

1 new wells that withdraw in excess of 50,000 gallons  
2 per day. I think that's needed. Right now there's  
3 nothing to stop a Duke Energy from coming in and  
4 drawing out as much water as they want, and that  
5 affects all of us. And I think there should be  
6 somebody that can say who draws out that kind of water  
7 from the Sparta.

8 I do appreciate y'all's time and I thank y'all  
9 for being here.

10 MR. WALKER:

11 Any questions by the Commission? (No response.)  
12 All right, we'll try once again, Reggie Skains. Mr.  
13 Skains? Ed Aston? John -- and once again I apologize  
14 for not being able to read your name -- on East  
15 Georgia Avenue here in Ruston? Okay. Albert Hulett?  
16 Edward Lee? The last card I have is for Bill Jones,  
17 Senator Bill Jones?

18 In that case then, before I turn it over to  
19 Commissioner Gautreaux for some closing remarks, I  
20 would like to remind you that once again the public  
21 comment period will be held open for a period of 30  
22 days to receive any additional comments from the  
23 public, that is until 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, December  
24 19, 2002. Written comments must be submitted to the  
25 Louisiana Ground Water Management Commission, P.O. Box  
26 94275, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70804-9275, and please  
27 put attention Anthony J. Duplechin, Jr., and please  
28 reference Docket No. GWMC 02-0001.

29 I would like to thank all of the commentators  
30 tonight. The comments were clear, straightforward,

1 and very concise, and I appreciate all of your  
2 courtesies and cooperation. I turn it back over to  
3 Commissioner Gautreaux.

4 COMMISSIONER GAUTREAUX:

5 Thank you, Stephen. And I would just like to  
6 echo the thanks again, we can't say it enough. You've  
7 taken part in history and hope you will continue to do  
8 so. We're talking about one of the most vital  
9 resources we can talk about, so important on an  
10 individual and community, state, global basis. So  
11 your patience tonight is much appreciated. Richard,  
12 we always appreciate your driving; Olevia, all our  
13 northern Louisianians, but I guess tonight we'll  
14 appreciate it a little bit more. So again, thanks,  
15 and I hope we'll see you in the future on many  
16 occasions, and don't forget to hit those web sites,  
17 you can also relay comments on the development of the  
18 state's water plan as well. So thank you very much.  
19 Thank you, Commissioners.

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## CERTIFICATE

1  
2 I, SUZETTE M. MAGEE, Certified Court Reporter, do  
3 hereby certify that the foregoing hearing was held  
4 before the Honorable Stephen Walker, Hearing Officer,  
5 on November 19, 2002, in the Ruston High School  
6 Auditorium, 900 Bearcat Drive, Ruston, Louisiana; that  
7 I did report the proceedings thereof in Docket No.  
8 GWMC02-0001; that the foregoing pages, numbered 1  
9 through 96, inclusive, constitute a true and correct  
10 transcript of the proceedings thereof.

11  
12 \_\_\_\_\_  
13 SUZETTE M. MAGEE, CCR #93079

14 CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER  
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