Dear Editor,

I wish to encourage all citizens of Llano to attend the Water Forum to be held on Thursday evening at the Llantex. It is important for everyone to be aware that the City is operating under a false premise of an impending water crisis in order to gain support for their Riley Mountain pipe dream. Llano is not in peril of an inadequate water supply necessitating locating an additional water source. The City commissioned a report by Halff Associates on Reconnaissance of Additional Water Supplies for the City of Llano and received it in February 2012. I have read through the report and have discussed its findings with several people with vast experience in similar fields concerning these matters including a Geophysicist and a Petroleum Engineer. Just because some people in our City want to drill wells in the Riley Mountain area does not diminish the validity of the report's findings.

Data included in that report shows water availability for the City for up to 153 days with no water flowing into our two lakes. That is usable water and the lakes would not be dry until after 196 days with no flow. The models used in determining this took into account the surface area of the lakes, the representative capacities of the lakes, the evaporation based on surface area, and water usage during each step of the test. It allowed for .6 million gallons per day (MGD) of water usage. In our 2011 drought we actually used as little as .4 MGD due to our individual conservation efforts. The longest period of drought was in 1956 and had a period of 67 days with no flow.

The report also stated that maintaining a full level in our lakes requires an incoming flow of 2.3 to 3.4 cubic feet per second. This is why the installation of a flow gage just upstream from the upper lake was recommended and recently approved. Use of this gage allows the City to set water restrictions in a timely manner allowing for this sustainable water supply for extended periods in case of future drought.

As for frequency of droughts, Llano experienced one on average once every 14 years with a period of 8-20 years between them. Looking at our past droughts in 1956, 1964, 1984, and 2011 they would appear to be taking longer to occur rather than becoming more frequent.

This is not to say we do nothing. We should still look strongly at rainwater collection systems on our municipal buildings. Some of these structures have very large roof areas and would yield great results. Incentivizing rainwater harvesting at the private level would further reduce our demands on the river. The use of treated waste water to water ball fields and the golf course would also reduce the demands on the City's treated water supply.

The bottom line is we are not in a crisis. I hear the same thing locally that I hear from our Federal government elected officials. Don't let a crisis go to waste is the saying. It appears that sometimes one must create a crisis first to justify unneeded increases in taxation and utility fees in order to fund unnecessary projects.

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