**NAME: Lauro Bustamante** **DISTRICT: Mayor**

# 2009 SAN ANTONIO CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES' QUESTIONNAIRE:

**1. How will you protect the Edwards Aquifer, our City's drinking water source, if elected to City Council?**

I would advocate to;
A. Protect Water as a Public Resource and repeal the rule of capture
B. Fund major purchases of parks, open space, and conservation easements to protect critical water resources and provide recreational opportunities.
C. Repeal Texas' "grandfather" law and empower cities and counties to manage growth and protect water quality
D. Enable local, elected Ground Water Conservation Districts across Texas to manage groundwater pumping and land use and other activities that threaten the quality or quantity of recharging water.
E. Protect the Rural Character of the Hill Country by limiting new highways and toll roads and authorizing local scenic highway designations

**2. Please identify priority water issues in your district.**

A. Pollution
We are literally poisoning our drinking water when we allow development to take place that will undeniably increase loads of pollutants over the sensitive karst limestone aquifer.

B. Overpumping and Rule of Capture
Current pumping form the aquifer has resulted in diminished pring flows in San Antonio.
Water hustlers are trying to secure rights to pump tremendous amounts of water out of the western reaches of the Edwards Aquifer to pipe and sell to other parts of the state. Texas' antiquated "Rule of Capture" allows people to pump as much water from underneath their property as they please, even if in doing so they cause their neighbors' wells to go dry.

C. Infrastructure and Development
The Texas Hill Country and Edwards Aquifer region is under assault from urban sprawl. Farms and ranches are being turned into subdivisions, shopping centers, and highways. This pattern of unsustainable growth is threatening to pollute and over-pump the watersheds that replenish the Edwards Aquifer and the Great Springs of Texas, including drinking water for over 1.7 million Texans.
For decades, the rugged terrain and scarcity of water in the Hill Country kept urban and suburban development at bay, while the flatter, more fertile eastern edge of the Balcones Escarpment supplied resources for growth and development. But modern construction equipment, speculative real investment, and government subsidies are transforming the Hill Country into Everywhere U.S.A. All of these ingredients in urbanization come together in providing infrastructure for development: roads, sewer lines, and water lines. This infrastructure is often subsidized by us, the taxpayers.

D. Quarries
The Edwards Aquifer, and other aquifer in Texas, are being blasted, chopped, and dug up. Often the limestone rock is crushed at the site of the quarry before being hauled off in large trucks, frequently to road construction sites.

* Currently there are no adequate state regulations to protect groundwater, surface water, or adjacent communities from the impacts of the rock crushers and quarries.

* Where these facilities are located in Edwards Limestone, the underlying aquifer is particularly vulnerable to contamination, whether or not the quarry actually excavates to below the aquifer water level.

* Local communities experience air quality degradation, dangerous roadways with higher traffic volume, and water quality degradation. They have no voice, however, in quarry or crusher siting or operational decisions.

E. Grandfathering

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The interpretation of vested rights ("grandfathering") has become one of the most crucial issues in determining the shape of new development and, ultimately, how our cities will look and function for years to come. Legal challenges to municipal enforcement of regulations adopted to protect the aquifer, protect the public from flooding, preserve trees and open space for the public's enjoyment, prescribe density limits, and even require sidewalks or ban unsightly billboards have become routine.

**3. True or false: The Edwards Aquifer filters stormwater runoff that enters it.**

The Edwards Aquifer filters stormwater runoff that enters it. True.

**4. According to the 1995 San Antonio Water Quality Ordinance, the amount of impervious cover allowed in the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone is up to 30% for Residential, 50% for Multifamily, and 65% for Commercial developments. (Note: Impervious cover = any surface that does not allow water infiltration). Why are different amounts of impervious cover allowed for different kinds of development?**

Commercial Developers and special interest have bought some politicians through contributions to their campaigns.

**5. Would you support extending impervious cover and land use restrictions (for example, prohibiting uses that might threaten or degrade water quality) to the Edwards Aquifer Contributing Zone within San Antonio and the ETJ?**

Yes.

**6. Would you support a Proposition to purchase land or conservation easements in the Recharge Zone and Contributing Zone within the San Antonio Metropolitan Area?**

Yes.

**7. What do you propose to relieve traffic congestion on the Northside while protecting the Edwards Aquifer?**

Traffic congestion can be reduced or eliminated! All items below cost very little. Any by themselves would decrease traffic congestion. Together, they would eliminate it.
A. Implement employee parking cash-out (equalizing the parking subsidy). This would have an immediate impact of reducing car commuting by 25%.
B. Raise the gas tax in a "revenue neutral" manner. At present, about half of local road costs are paid for by property taxes. "Revenue neutral" means all gas tax proceeds would go toward reducing property and sales taxes..
C. Institute "Fare Lanes." These let anyone use carpool lanes, but charges them a fare per car. Use existing lanes of roads. Do not add more lanes.
D. Eliminate all "traffic mitigation fees" and "developer fees" and "parking assessment fees" that subsidize the automobile. Alternatively, use these fees for constructing guideway transit instead of automobile-related construction that encourages greater auto use.
E. Eliminate parking requirements in industrial areas (and ideally, everywhere). If necessary, implement parking permits for neighborhoods (already common in some cities).
F. Implement traffic calming to create a more livable neighborhood and decrease automobile dependency. This will also decrease auto usage.
G. Any congestion still remaining will be eliminated by use of congestion pricing. This means charging for road use an amount that varies so that traffic is kept moving. As rush hour approaches, the price increases in stages in order to keep total cars using the facility at the same optimal flow level. The money raised could be used to build guideway transit because road users also benefit by paying for potential motorists to use alternatives. Congestion pricing also increases highway capacity (see graph, below), while reducing political pressure for more highway construction.
H. If any new lane or road is constructed, use non-stop toll collection (we call them "road fares") to pay for it. All moneys for the new lane or road needs to be paid for by its direct users and preferably privately financed to guaranty that there would be no government subsidy. The roadway needs to pay the same property tax rate as railroads, to be fair.

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8. **Agree or disagree: Developers have the right to the highest possible return investment on their land.**

Disagree.

9. **Agree or disagree: Land owners are entitled to any rezoning request that is allowed by the Unified Development Code.**

Disagree.

10. **Agree or disagree: Each Council Member knows what is best for his or her own district.**

Disagree.