

Dec. 13, 2019

Att: Presiding Office Constance Owen

My family has lived in and around Halstead for four generations. My great-grandfather helped found The First Mennonite Church in 1875. We have been Stewards of the Equus Beds Aquifer for nearly 150 years. And, I hope they will continue to be Stewards of the Equus Beds for many generations to come.

I spent my childhood on a farm three miles north of Halstead and now live four miles southeast of Halstead. My husband is a retired farmer, but, we own and live on a quarter-section with two domestic wells, one at the house and one by the farm shop which is used to water cattle at a small feedlot. We also have a well that supplies water to a pivot irrigation system.

When I was a little girl we were taught to not waste water, or, anything else. We got our toothbrushes wet, turned the water off, brushed our teeth and rinsed with water from a glass. We shared bath water. We watered flowers when needed and gardens, but, didn't use water on lawns or anything considered unnecessary because we needed it for the livestock and homes.

Having an ample supply of good quality water is the most important thing needed when a house is put on the market or when a new home is built. And, if over pumping of the Equus Beds allows chloride to move further into the aquifer, life as all of us know it would be changed forever.

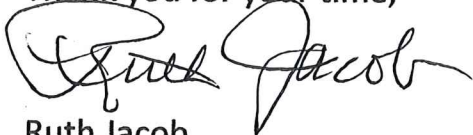
All of us who live or own land above the Equus Beds need the water to raise the crops to feed the world, and, to feed livestock. The City of Wichita has generously said they would drill new wells or deepen existing ones to make sure everyone has water, but, do they know how much that would cost? Do they know how long it would take? And, are they willing to be disrupted from daily life like our families and farmers would be; for days or weeks while waiting on drillers to become available? Farmers can't be without water for even a day. And, many of the wells are shallow above the Equus Beds so the disaster of wells going dry during a 1% drought with the City pulling so much extra water would encompass dozens of homes, livestock wells and irrigation pivots.

And, it isn't right that the City of Wichita could get 120,000 additional acre feet of water to use in times of a 1% drought when farmers in the Equus Beds area have been denied any new allocations of water since the early 1980s. The Groundwater Management District #2 was formed to deal with the problem of water having over appropriated for years. They know this proposal could be disastrous because of the over appropriation and have said it should not be allowed.

Agriculture is America's bread and butter; the City's bread and butter. Something of this magnitude, with so many uncertainties should never be allowed by the District of Water Resources, a government body within the Kansas Department of Agriculture that governs the use and allocation of the State's water resources. It's understandable that Wichita wants to keep their customers happy, but, we deserve to be happy, too.

The Equus Beds already have the best stewards possible. They have the Groundwater Management District #2 team and they have the residents and landowners that live above them.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Jacob". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "R".

Ruth Jacob

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Sedgwick, KS 67135

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