

	JUSTIN BERRY <i>(REPUBLICAN)</i>	ELLEN TROXCLAIR <i>(REPUBLICAN)</i>	KODI SAWIN <i>(INDEPENDENT)</i>
<p>1. What are your top three legislative priorities if elected? If you do not list water availability as one of them, how do you rank water availability in Central Texas as an issue for you?</p>	<p>My top 3 legislative priorities would be first public safety issues, second securing our border, and third continue to work on providing realistic relief with property taxes. I fully understand that importance to our area, economy, and future of our community with regards to our water. I have lived out here in the Lake Travis area for many years now and was here when Lake Travis was virtually dry. I saw our businesses close, property values plummet, and the concern we all had for our lake.</p>	<p>Without water, we cannot have life. It might not be the most talked about issue on the campaign trail, but it is a prerequisite for everything else. I believe we must be good stewards of our water and natural resources, so they will be available for generations to come. Economic growth and sustainable natural resource development are not mutually exclusive, we can and must ensure both. Ensuring water availability for my district will be a top priority. Securing the border, reducing property taxes, and protecting the Hill Country's resources and values are among my top issues.</p>	<p>To me, the distorted partisanship of our time keeps local communities from addressing their issues at the policy level. Instead, parties represent donors and party interests, not people. Unfortunately, that means we can't ever fix property taxes, implement appropriate checks on water and wastewater systems, or fund our infrastructure properly (electricity and water).</p> <p>And that is why I am running, to make politics local again because a Hill Country stream knows no political party nor a hilltop an ideological position.</p> <p>My top issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Water quantity and quality -Land use -Property taxes <p>However, I hesitate to list those in priority because, frankly, I see them all as systemic issues that ultimately influence each other.</p>

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<p>2. What concerns do you have that Central Texas will not have enough water in the future to support an additional one million in population and numerous large companies moving into the area?</p>	<p>My concern is high. As our area continues to grow and we continue to face more regular droughts, we must keep an eye on our water supply. I share concerns with our water availability. If we did not have those major storms in 2018, I fear our lake levels would be critically low.</p>	<p>Many people forget that it wasn't so long ago that we were in a prolonged drought. Lake Travis and our highland lakes were half-full. We have been fortunate when it comes to rain in recent years, but we cannot take it for granted. We must plan for the future, especially with the projected growth of our region. We have challenges when it comes to growth and water supply, but they are challenges that can be overcome if we take them seriously and plan ahead. In my role on the Austin City Council, I was a leader in identifying issues with their water treatment plants and continually pushed for investment in technology and capacity in order to plan for growth. Unfortunately, that call to action was unanswered by the council and the city is now dealing with the consequences of their lack of planning and in their fourth boil water notice in as many years. I will continue my dedication and problem solving in water issues in the House.</p>	<p>Glad you asked! I have more than 150 words to say on the matter! But will refrain.</p> <p>Water resources in the Central Texas area are under stress because of corporate relocations and expansions subsidized by property and sales tax dollars.</p> <p>Texas leadership must address the stress that subsidized growth has on our natural resources from water to aggregate mining operations. As the area population grows, additional demand on the Highland Lakes and groundwater will cause greater water level variations. And low lake levels should be unacceptable to all.</p> <p>Make no mistake: I am for economic development, and I am pro making money. But the state must make sure that tax dollars used to entice companies is matched by state dollars to secure new water resources, improve infrastructure, acquire land for wastewater disposal, and, most importantly, ensure that regular taxpayers aren't left footing the bill to replace and repair water and land lost in the state's zeal to one-up California.</p>

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3. As the demand for water and the need for new water supplies increase, understanding the hydrological connection between groundwater and surface water will be critical in developing policies to effectively manage these two resources. While both are consumable sources of water, they have been managed independently. Would you support the creation of an advisory board or legislative study to examine surface water and groundwater interaction?	I would be open to having a legislative study to examine the surface/ groundwater interaction to better help make policy recommendations for our communities	Yes	I do support an advisory board or legislative study to examine surface water and groundwater interaction.
4. Would you support legislation that would increase accountability and transparency for entities such as river authorities? If yes, would you support a publicly elected member to the LCRA Board of Directors to increase accountability and transparency?	Yes and yes	Yes	I don't know enough about the proposal to add an elected official to the LCRA Board of Directors to hold an opinion. However, I am amenable to learning more and working with the Central Texas Water Coalition's members to address accountability and transparency.

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<p>5. The Central Texas region is projected to add up to one million more residents by 2030. With no significant water supply projects planned, more arid weather conditions becoming the norm, and declining inflows into the Highland Lakes (the region’s primary source of drinking water), should the LCRA curtail its practice of selling mass quantities of water to downstream irrigators for the purpose of flooding fields for weed control?</p>	<p>I think we must ensure our area’s water is focused on our regions necessities first and should be the first priority before being sold downstream, especially in times of drought.</p>	<p>The water supply for residential customers should always come first. The practice should be curtailed unless there is an excess of water to justify it.</p>	<p>As a water policy professional, I tend to see rivers and aquifers as large, regionally connected systems. Rarely do I advocate for one beneficial use to take a priority over another. The reality, all customers of the LCRA should (and many do) maximize the efficiency of their beneficial use.</p> <p>On the surface, that may seem as if I am against curtailing downstream agricultural users. On the contrary, I am for curtailing use by ensuring and increasing efficiencies in how water is used by all customers of the LCRA, including the City of Austin, firm customers, and rice farmers.</p> <p>I also believe that it is the duty of the stewards of the Colorado River to make sure residents and businesses around the Highland Lakes, in the middle-basin areas, like Bastrop, and those in the bay area are considered in management decisions of the LCRA. The economies of these areas depend on the health of our riparian system too.</p>

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<p>6. LCRA municipal and business customers have subsidized downstream irrigators through inequitable water rates. Would you support ensuring all customers pay a fair rate that will encourage conservation and help fund new water supplies?</p>	<p>I believe our area should be getting the best rates as this is a key source for our area’s consumers, again our area should be the top priority when it comes to water supply and conservations concerns</p>	<p>I would have to see the details of the plan and rates before committing, but we must make sure our water infrastructure keeps up with the growth of our region. I look forward to our continued conversations about how we can work together to ensure we have the resources needed for our future.</p>	<p>One might argue that the City of Austin no longer pays for its water because its LCRA deal years ago allowed for pre-paid water at a discounted rate. Meaning communities and firm customers—many in HD 19—that ring the outer edges of Austin, in fact, subsidize Austin’s growth and water use.</p> <p>It is critical to remember that agricultural water demand will continue to decline, while the excessive population growth in Central Texas will continue to rise with increased demand to match. In other words, my concern, as it relates to the health of the Highland Lakes and environmental flows downstream, is the unrelenting growth in and around Travis, Hays, and Williamson counties rather than the downward trending demand for agricultural water downstream.</p> <p>To that end, I wish to reiterate that we must measure our decisions and management of water resources systemically—and carefully contemplate the long-term impacts of financial and hydrogeologic choices, alike.</p> <p>And yes, all customers should pay an equitable rate for water—always.</p>