

RESOLUTION

OPPOSING A NEW PROPOSAL FROM STATE AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES CALLING FOR AERIAL SPRAYING OF HERBICIDES ONTO THE BANKS OF THE RIO GRANDE OR THE ERADICATION OF ARUNDO DONAX, aka CARRIZO CANE THAT CAN BE HARMFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN HEALTH.

WHEREAS, the Rio Grande is an international river that provides water and life to approximately 6 million people; and,

WHEREAS, the river serves as a critical wildlife corridor; is home to a wide diversity of vegetation; and, serves as the meeting point for the Central and Mississippi flyways, making it one of the most important bird migration routes in North America for hundreds of species of birds; and,

WHEREAS, the Rio Grande is currently ranked as one of the 10 Most Endangered Rivers in the World, by the World Wildlife Fund; and,

WHEREAS, a prominent reason for the river's "endangered" designation is water scarcity fueled in part by the presence of invasive plant species inhabiting the river banks one of which is Giant River Cane, also known as *Arundo donax*, and, more popularly, as "Carrizo" which consumes about 500 gallons of water per square meter and is neither vital to the ecology of the Rio Grande nor does it serve as a critical habitat for endangered species; and,

WHEREAS, Carrizo has become an obstacle for the U.S. Border Patrol in its mission to combat human and drug trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border making Carrizo a natural foe to the river and national security; and,

WHEREAS, there is a broad consensus among the people of Laredo that Carrizo cane should be controlled to solve these dual problems; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture continues to demonstrate, in scientifically peer-reviewed studies, success in reducing the Carrizo cane's biomass by using an effective combination of mechanical and biological methods through its ongoing "USDA-ARS" Area-wide Arundo Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program for the Rio Grande; and,

WHEREAS, the County of Webb has ascertained that the State of Texas led by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board is planning to undertake a Carrizo cane management project that will involve the use of aerial spraying of potent chemicals including Imazapyr, Imazamox, and glyphosate, the latter of which is an identified carcinogen; and,

WHEREAS, dusting the riverbanks with chemicals such as Imazapyr poses risks to public health from possible chemical spray drift, runoff and leaching; and,

WHEREAS, according to a fact sheet prepared by the Washington State Department of Agriculture Imazapyr is highly mobile and persistent in soils. Evidence exists that besides contaminating groundwater and surface water, Imazapyr also contains an acid that can irritate the eyes, skin, and respiratory system in humans, and has been linked to Parkinson's Disease-like symptoms; and,

WHEREAS, communities along the border, from both the U.S.A. and the Republic of Mexico oppose the aerial spraying of such chemicals along the banks of the river, the borderland's only source of drinking water, and specifically, the people of Laredo are of undivided mind that the U.S. and Texas Governments need to use biological agents and mechanical methods rather than herbicides to manage the Carrizo cane; and,

WHEREAS, the Mexican Government has stated that its water intake plants are unable to filter out these chemicals for drinking water, and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico has protested the use of the chemicals fearing contamination of their drinking water; and,

WHEREAS, effective, alternative, mechanical-bio methods exist for addressing the Carrizo problem, including, applying chemical agents at ground levels; hand-cutting the cane, and introducing the Arundo Wasp that is a natural enemy of Carrizo laying its eggs only there, with its larvae having the effect of stunting the growth of Carrizo to where it can no longer thrive; and,

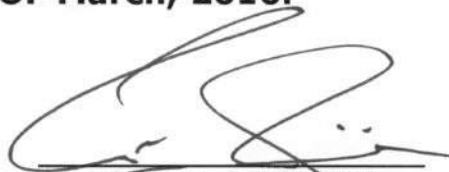
WHEREAS, work performed by the USDA along a 558-mile stretch of the Rio Grande, from Del Rio to Brownsville, using biological methods (Arundo Wasps) and a new cane topping method with special fitted tractors has yielded a 25% reduction in the cane's biomass in the tested area, thereby demonstrating the feasibility of alternative methods of treating Carrizo that do not implicate any risk to the health of the public as does the aerial spraying of potentially harmful chemicals; and,

WHEREAS, in 2008, the Rio Grande International Study Center along with several Laredo neighborhoods were involved in a lawsuit that ended in a 2009 legal settlement with the U.S. Border Patrol forbidding, forever, any aerial spraying of Carrizo along a 16.1 mile stretch of riverbank in Laredo and its environs,

IT IS NOW, THEREFORE, HEREBY RESOLVED THAT:

1. The foregoing preamble is hereby incorporated and made a part of this resolution as though fully set out;
2. That Webb County is against and opposes the use of aerial spraying of chemicals such as Imazapyr to eradicate or control the biomass of *Arundo donax* growing along the riverbanks of the Rio Grande generally, and in the area of Laredo, Texas in particular;
3. That Webb County is in favor of the use of alternative methods for the eradication and controlling of *Arundo donax* now proliferating on the river banks of the Rio Grande including mechanical bio measures such as the introduction of the Arundo Wasp, and the use the new cane topping method referred to herein, as well as the manual cutting of Carrizo along the river banks; and,
4. Webb County petitions the State of Texas to support the USDA's Arundo Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program in and around the Rio Grande and to avoid all methods that use potentially dangerous herbicides, especially aerially spraying of herbicides, which the City has already condemned.

**RESOLVED BY THE WEBB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT ON
THIS THE _____ DAY OF March, 2016.**


TANO E. TIJERINA
WEBB COUNTY JUDGE



FRANK J. SCIARAFFA
COMMISSIONER PCT. 1


JOHN C. GALO
COMMISSIONER PCT. 3


ROSAURO "WAWI" TIJERINA
COMMISSIONER PCT. 2


JAIME A. CANALES
COMMISSIONER PCT. 4

ATTEST:


MARGIE RAMIREZ-IBARRA
WEBB COUNTY CLERK

