

March 27, 2026

Board of Directors

Nueces River Authority

Re: Statement of Concern — Travis Pruski, Chief Operating Officer

Dear Members of the Board:

I write this letter with great concern, but with an unwavering sense of obligation. After more than twelve years of service to the Nueces River Authority — first as a board member and subsequently as an employee — I can no longer, in good conscience, continue in my role as Chief Operating Officer under the current executive leadership. What I have witnessed and experienced demands that this Board be fully informed. The issues I am raising are not matters of personality or preference — they are matters of organizational integrity, financial accountability, and the trust placed in the NRA by the communities we serve. I will not remain silent while that trust is at risk.

Gratitude for Staff and Community

None of my concerns are reflective of the NRA staff. I am deeply grateful to have worked alongside some of the most dedicated and talented professionals I have encountered in my career. The NRA staff have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the communities we serve, often going above and beyond under challenging circumstances. Their integrity and hard work are a true reflection of the NRA's mission, and I am proud of everything we have accomplished together.

I also extend my sincere gratitude to the Board of Directors for the trust placed in me during my tenure. Serving this organization and the residents and partners of the Nueces River Basin has been one of the great honors of my professional life. I am particularly proud of the collaborative relationships built with our county and municipal partners, including the Regional Flood Planning Group and the more than twenty counties whose pledged support made our flood mitigation efforts possible.

Concerns Leading to This Decision

I have a professional and fiduciary obligation to document the circumstances that have made it impossible for me to continue in my role. I offer these concerns not to disparage the organization, but because this Board deserves the truth — and the communities of the Nueces Basin deserve leadership that is honest with the people responsible for overseeing it. What follows represents only a portion of what I have observed. My concerns are directly related to the Executive Director.

1. Budget Discrepancies and Exclusion from Planning Processes

In June 2025, I raised formal concerns directly with Mr. Byrum regarding mathematical inconsistencies in the desalination budget and the feasibility of the reservation contract figures presented for FY 2025/26. My concerns were dismissed without substantive review or explanation. Following that exchange, I was effectively shut out of further budget deliberations and was never officially provided the Planning and Utilities budget for the current cycle — a budget I am operationally responsible for executing. The first time I saw that budget was at the August 8th, 2025 Board meeting — the same meeting at which the Board was asked to make major financial decisions. Not once since then has any formal discussion taken place with me regarding budget performance, project targets, or contract status. This is not a minor procedural lapse — it is a fundamental failure of operational oversight that has left the organization exposed.

2. Accuracy of Information Presented to the Board

At the August 8, 2025 Board meeting, Mr. Byrum presented figures to this Board regarding desalination customer counts, gallonage sold, and revenue that were materially inaccurate. He stated that 36 MGD had been sold and that the corresponding revenue was in the bank. When questioned by a Board member, he confirmed it. As the staff member solely responsible for water sales to customers outside the City of Corpus Christi, I was not consulted prior to that presentation — nor was any operational staff member. Our shared tracking spreadsheets told a starkly different story: only 21 MGD was committed and paid for at that time. The Board made significant financial decisions based on information that did not reflect operational reality. We did not reach the 36 MGD threshold until November 4th, nearly three months later. I am also compelled to disclose that I was directed by Mr. Byrum not to speak with any Board members — at that meeting or at any meeting going forward. This directive, if carried out, would have prevented this Board from receiving accurate information from the operational staff responsible for the very programs being discussed. Following the August meeting, I brought my concerns directly to Board President Eric Burnett. He assured me he would look into the matter. I never received a follow-up response. Of equal concern, Mr. Byrum continued to present this same materially inaccurate information at City of Corpus Christi Council meetings in September and October 2025. His current slide presentation — which he continues to use in public settings — contains inaccurate figures regarding our partner cities and water districts. I have raised this concern directly on multiple occasions. It has not been corrected.

3. Jeopardized Regional Flood Grant

The NRA and the Regional Flood Planning Group invested years of intensive effort to secure a \$30 million flood mitigation and early warning grant — backed by over twenty counties pledging more than \$5 million in cost-share support. This grant represents one of the most significant funding opportunities in recent NRA history, and in the wake of the devastating flooding that struck our region in the summer of 2025, it is not merely a priority — it is a moral obligation to the communities we serve. Despite that urgency, I made repeated requests over a three-month period for the interlocal agreements needed to formalize our county partnerships. Those requests were met with delays. It has since been determined that the contractual documents submitted for the grant are not in compliance with Texas Water Development Board requirements — placing the entire grant at serious risk of loss or a delay of more than a year. The people who suffered through that flooding deserve better.

4. Responsiveness to Staff and Community Partners

The pattern of unresponsiveness to staff and community partners is not isolated — it is consistent and consequential. When a utilities management crisis emerged in September 2024, I was left without staff, without guidance, and told simply to fix it. When news stories surfaced in October 2025, Judge Teal of McMullen County — our largest utilities customer and one of the NRA's most steadfast regional supporters — personally requested a call from Mr. Byrum to discuss the situation and seek assurance that the NRA was handling it appropriately. Mr. Byrum's response was that he had issued a written statement and considered the matter closed. That response was not only inadequate — it was damaging to a relationship this organization depends on. Similarly, the City of Driscoll has faced ongoing TCEQ regulatory challenges, and my staff and I made multiple requests for executive assistance on matters we had no prior experience handling. Those requests went unanswered. These are not minor administrative oversights. They are failures of leadership that are actively eroding the trust and credibility the NRA has built over decades with its regional partners.

5. Directive Regarding Professional Conduct

On March 19, 2026, I received a call from Board President Eric Burnett in which I was explicitly directed to stop raising questions and to defer, without exception, to Mr. Byrum's direction. I want this Board to understand what that directive means in practice: the COO of this organization was instructed to stop asking questions, stop verifying information, and stop advocating for the communities and partners the NRA exists to serve. That is not leadership — it is the suppression of accountability. I cannot, in good conscience, comply. Asking questions, verifying data, and pushing back when information does not align with operational reality are not optional functions of the COO position — they are its core responsibilities and, in the context of a public authority, its fiduciary obligations.

Commitment to a Professional Transition

Despite these circumstances, I am proud of what NRA staff accomplished together, and I am grateful for every opportunity I was given to serve. I sincerely hope the NRA will continue to grow as a leader in water resource management for South Texas and that the partnerships built over many years will endure.

It is my sincere belief, based on my close and daily working relationships with NRA staff, that the concerns I have raised are not mine alone — and that if staff members could speak without fear of retaliation, this Board would hear a much broader chorus of the same. I would also respectfully urge this Board to conduct a thorough review of expenditures within the desalination program, including consulting contracts, travel, and operational costs. I believe that review will raise additional concerns warranting the Board's attention.

I firmly believe this organization can make a meaningful and lasting impact on the millions of people it serves. However, based on everything I have witnessed, I do not believe the current Executive Director or Deputy Executive Director are capable of leading the Nueces River Authority in a manner consistent with its mission, its obligations to its community partners, or the trust this Board has placed in its leadership.

I am fully aware that coming forward with this information may carry serious professional consequences, and I accept that without reservation. I did not write this letter because it was easy — I wrote it because it was right. The communities of the Nueces River Basin deserve an organization that is honest with its Board, transparent in its operations, and accountable to the people it serves. I would rather face consequences for speaking the truth than remain silent while this organization drifts from those principles.

My faith in God guides everything I do. I trust that the Board will prayerfully consider the information presented in this letter and act with wisdom and integrity in the best interest of the Nueces River Authority. Whatever outcome this Board determines is right, I will accept it with humility and peace, knowing that I have been honest and acted in accordance with my conscience.

If it is best for me to leave, I am committed to a professional and organized transition. I am currently leading more than two dozen active projects and will make every effort to ensure that knowledge, documentation, and stakeholder relationships are properly transferred so that the communities depending on this work are not adversely affected. I welcome any meetings with NRA staff necessary to accomplish this.

Respectfully submitted,

Travis Pruski

Chief Operations Officer

Nueces River Authority

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