

RESOLUTION NO. #19-005

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LONE STAR  
GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT APPROVING  
MEDIA POLICY

THE STATE OF TEXAS

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LONE STAR GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District ("District") was created by the Texas Legislature through the enactment of House Bill 2362, Chapter 1321, Acts of the 77th Legislature, Regular Session, 2001 (together with subsequent legislative amendments, the "Act"), pursuant to the authority of Article XVI, § 59 of the Texas Constitution, as a groundwater conservation district operating under Chapter 36, Texas Water Code, Section 59, Article XVI of the Texas Constitution, and the Act;

WHEREAS, the District's Board of Directors ("Board") seeks to establish standard operating procedures for conduct and communications related to the media;

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed a draft Media Policy at the District's meeting on April 9, 2019;

WHEREAS, the Board seeks to adopt the Media Policy attached as Attachment A;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District that the Media Policy is adopted, and that a copy of this resolution shall be posted on the District's website and in its office.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on this 9th day of April 2019.

LONE STAR GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

By:   
Webb Melder, President

ATTEST:

  
Stuart Taylor, Board Secretary



**LONE STAR GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION  
MEDIA POLICY**

**1. Introduction.**

This Media Policy (“Policy”) of the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District (“District”) is duly adopted by the District Board of Directors in order to establish prudent and acceptable practices regarding District employees’ and Board members’ (collectively referred to as “District representatives”) conduct and communications related to the press media and social media in all forms. Social media means any tool for online publication and commentary including without limitation blogs, wikis, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, and YouTube. The District is committed to effective and transparent communications utilizing all media platforms.

**2. Purpose and Application.**

Pursuant to the District Enabling Act, the District is a “body politic and corporate”<sup>1</sup> and therefore has a legitimate government interest in unified, efficient, and consistent communications with and to the public, whether through the press or through social media. The District also strives to maintain the goodwill and reputation of the District among its citizens or in the community, and to provide the proper level of due process required under the law on all decisions of the District. This Policy applies to District employees while both on and off duty, and District employees must also adhere to the District’s Personnel Policy in conjunction with this Policy. This Policy applies to District Board members in their capacities as both individual members of the community and as a District official.

**3. Disclaimer.**

- (a) Pursuant to this Policy, the District disavows, and is not responsible for any sites, posts, opinions, content, or other communications not coordinated through and approved in accordance with the procedures set forth in this Policy.
- (b) If a District representative posts or provides information purporting to be on behalf of the District while using a social media site or speaking to the media without first coordinating such information with the General Manager, the District is not responsible for any such posted content, and such content is not to be construed as reflecting the views or opinions of the District.
- (c) It shall be a violation of this Policy for any District employee to post content or make a statement to the media as a representative of the District, or on the District’s behalf, without taking the required steps and receiving approval under Section 4 herein. Any such violation shall be grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with the District’s Personnel Policy.
- (d) The absence of explicit reference herein to a particular site or media platform does not limit the extent of the application of this Policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1, Chapter 1321, Acts of the 77th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2001.

**4. General Guidelines.**

- (a) All official statements of the District shall first be coordinated with the General Manager and Board President prior to any written or verbal statement being made to the press media or social media. Approval or denial of any statement shall be communicated to the District representative requestor in writing from the General Manager or Board President.
- (b) A District representative that posts or provides comments related to District business, but not as an approved statement of the District under Subsection (a) of this Section 4, shall explicitly provide the disclaimer that he/she is speaking on his/her own behalf, and not on behalf of the District by providing the following statement: "This statement is my own personal view, and does not necessarily represent a position held by the District or the District Board of Directors."
- (c) District representatives shall refrain from communicating confidential information to any individual that is not a District representative.
- (d) District representatives shall alert the General Manager or General Counsel if he/she sees a misrepresentation made about the District in press media or social media. If a District representative is accused by anyone of posting something improperly, he/she shall inform the General Manager or General Counsel of the situation promptly in order to determine the next best steps and to quickly resolve the situation.
- (e) District representatives shall notify the General Manager of any requests to speak in the community as a representative of the District. If the speaking engagement is accepted, the District representative shall coordinate the content of the engagement with the General Manager.

**5. Guidelines for Official District Sites.**

- (a) All District-sanctioned social media sites shall be maintained by the District General Manager, or his/her designee. Any content to be posted on District-sanctioned social media sites must meet the approval of the General Manager before it is to be posted.
- (b) All District representatives that engage in social media activities and/or visit any District-sanctioned social media site on the District's behalf shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies, including the Texas Public Information Act and the records retention schedule. All content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with these laws.
- (c) Any content posted as representative of the District or content posted to a District-sanctioned social media site containing any of the following is prohibited:

ATTACHMENT "A"

- (1) Comments unrelated to the particular site or blog article being commented upon;
- (2) Profane language or content;
- (3) Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability;
- (4) Sexually explicit content or language;
- (5) Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- (6) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- (7) Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
- (8) Information that is incorrect or misleading;
- (9) Information that is in conflict with an approved District policy, ordinance, directive, plan, or reveals confidential information; and/or
- (10) anything else that creates a disruption in the District workplace.

**(d)** Content submitted for posting on a District-sanctioned social media site that is deemed unsuitable for posting by the General Manager and Board President because it violates criteria in the preceding item of this Policy shall be retained pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act and the District's records retention schedule.

**6. Amendments to Policy.**

**(a)** All amendments to this Policy shall be made only upon approval of a majority of the District Board of Directors.