

June 29, 2021

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Page Cortez
Louisiana Senate President
Louisiana State Senate
Post Office Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RE: Veto of Senate Bill 203 of the 2021 Regular Session

Dear President Cortez:

Please be advised that I have vetoed Senate Bill 203 of the 2021 Regular Session.

This bill is intended to provide for an exception in the Code of Governmental Ethics for certain appointees on the Capitol Area Groundwater Commission. The bill would both retroactively clear several former members of the Commission from current ethics charges and would allow for a blanket exception to the ethics code going forward for members appointed pursuant to La. R.S. 38:3074(A)(2) and (3).¹ While I understand the dilemma for the members with ethics charges who may have inadvertently violated the code of ethics, I do not agree that there should be a prospective exception. The industrial users of the aquifer can provide nominations of individuals that will not run afoul of the ethics code, and my most recent appointees to the Commission do not have this issue. Should the legislature come back in the next session with an exception that is narrowly drafted to cure a previous inadvertent violation, I will support it. I cannot support a broad exception for all members in the future.

Sincerely,

John Bel Edwards
Governor

cc: Honorable Clay Schexnayder
Speaker of the House of Representatives

¹ For La. R.S. 38:3074(A)(3) the bill only applies to the member from a privately owned entity that furnishes water in the district.