



# Save Our Water – Lake Eufaula Bending the Ear of Some High Ranking Elected Officials!

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For Immediate Release

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EUFULA—Some members of the “Save Our Water, Lake Eufaula” Legislative Committee, fresh off the success of their standing room only, Jan. 12 community meeting, are bending the ear of some high-ranking elected officials.

On Jan. 19, Chairwoman Karen Weldin and SOWLE Legislative Committee member George Ellison met with US Senator James Inhofe at Giacomo’s Restaurant in McAlester while Inhofe was touring southeastern Oklahoma meeting with constituents. The topic of conversation: SOWLE concerns and goals. Specifically, the possible creation of a federal advisory committee and the economic damages caused to Eufaula and the surrounding communities by the rapidly plummeting lake levels. According to Weldin, Inhofe expressed his support for SOWLE’s mission and said he would work towards drafting legislation to form the federal advisory committee similar to those formed for neighboring lakes like Texoma.

“I think that the meeting with Sen. Inhofe was very productive,” Weldin said. “We got the face-to-face meeting that we had requested in our Dec. 2 letter to him, and he was very attentive, and very informed as to what our issues and concerns were. He was very receptive to helping us form that federal advisory committee.”

Weldin also stated that Inhofe was personally acquainted with the plight of another Oklahoma lake—Grand Lake, located in the northeastern corner of the state.

“Being a property owner at Grand Lake in Oklahoma, and just going through the threat of Grand Lake being lowered three feet, Sen. Inhofe expressed his understanding and compassion to the people of Lake Eufaula area,” Weldin said.

Inhofe has, to date, received nearly 4,000 letters from concerned citizens around Lake Eufaula (and throughout Oklahoma) expressing their desire for immediate and permanent changes in lake level management.

On another front, SOWLE volunteers met with Corps of Engineers officials this week to discuss lake management issues. SOWLE representatives told Corps officials that they believed the reason levels in Lake Eufaula were dropping so rapidly was not drought, nor evaporation; rather, they pointed towards the wasteful use of water to produce hydropower.

SOWLE volunteers presented the Corps with a copy of their position paper, which outlines many of the obvious problems around Lake Eufaula. The Corps assured SOWLE members that they would study the position paper and report on what administrative changes they could make to address those problems. The Corps also acknowledged that SWPA had the right to use most of the water down to 565 msl, some 13 feet lower than the lake is now—one of the central SOWLE concerns that would require a change at the legislative level. SOWLE vowed to take any and all necessary steps to stop hydropower production while Lake Eufaula levels are this low.

The Save Our Water Lake Eufaula Citizens Group is a group of community leaders, business owners, lake area and Oklahoma residents and concerned citizens who have come together to work to protect their water interests in Lake Eufaula.

For more information, go to [www.saveourwaterlakeeufaula.com](http://www.saveourwaterlakeeufaula.com)

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