April 12, 2019

Senate Intergovernmental Relations Committee
Chair: Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr.
Vice Chair: Sen. Charles Schwertner
Members: Sen. Carol Alvarado
Sen. Donna Campbell
Sen. Pat Fallon
Sen. José Menéndez
Sen. Robert Nichols

RE: S.B. 2078

Honorable Members of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee,

On behalf of our 52 member organizations and thousands of individual members, the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA) strongly opposes S.B. 2078 relating to restrictions on municipal regulation in certain areas.

The citizens that GEAA represents overwhelmingly support application of San Antonio’s tree protection and water quality ordinances in the ETJ. Land development patterns existing within the area that is subject to this legislation (410,000 acres governed by San Antonio’s tree preservation ordinance and 46,000 acres governed by its aquifer protection ordinance) have largely complied with San Antonio regulations. New development that does not comply with San Antonio’s tree preservation and water quality ordinances would not be compatible with existing land uses.

To change the rules at this point would decrease the quality of life and property values of those currently residing within the area. Trees serve to reduce flooding and add to property values. Stromwater management is a serious issue within this area, part of the notorious “Flash Flood Alley” that is among the areas most at risk of flooding in the U.S.A. Other efforts undertaken during this legislative session devote substantial resources to address stormwater management. SB 2078 would, we believe, undermine these efforts within this vulnerable area.

San Antonio’s water quality ordinances not only protect San Antonio’s water supply, they also protect the quality of water issuing from Comal Springs and the groundwater supplies of households that rely on private wells.

Many similar attempts have been made during past legislative sessions to nullify ability of municipalities to apply local ordinances within ETJ’s. All were ultimately defeated. Likewise, we urge you to scrap S.B. 2078. Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Respectfully,

Annalisa Peace, Executive Director

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