

Alamo, Austin, and Lone Star chapters of the Sierra Club
Bexar Audubon Society
Bexar Green Party
Boerne Together
Bulverde Neighborhood Alliance
Cibolo Nature Center
Citizens Allied for Smart Expansion
Citizens for the Protection of Cibolo Creek
Comal County Conservation Alliance
Environment Texas
First Universalist Unitarian Church of San Antonio
Friends of Canyon Lake
Friends of Dry Comal Creek
Friends of Government Canyon
Fuerza Unida
Green Party of Austin
Green Society of UTSA
Guadalupe River Road Alliance
Guardians of Lick Creek
Headwaters at Incarnate Word
Helotes Heritage Association
Hill Country Planning Association
Kendall County Well Owners Association
Kinney County Ground Zero
Leon Springs Business Association
Medina County Environmental Action
Native Plant Society of Texas – SA
Northwest Interstate Coalition of Neighborhoods
Preserve Castroville
Preserve Lake Dunlop Association
San Antonio Audubon Society
San Antonio Conservation Society
San Geronimo Valley Alliance
San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance
San Marcos River Foundation
Save Barton Creek Association
Save Our Springs Alliance
Scenic Loop/Boerne Stage Alliance
Securing a Future Environment
SEED Coalition
Solar San Antonio
Sisters of the Divine Providence
Travis County Green Party
Water Aid – Texas State University
West Texas Springs Alliance
Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation
Wimberley Valley Watershed Association

May 28, 2019

Ms. Julie Frank
The Office of Governor Greg Abbott
Sent via e-mail

RE: HB 1806

Dear Ms. Frank,

I am writing to ask Gov. Abbott veto HB 1806. relating to the use of water withdrawn from the Edwards Aquifer by certain entities.

There was no transparency on the part of San Antonio Water systems (SAWS) in filing this legislation. I came across HB 1806 while researching bills that might be pertinent to our legislative agenda. I contacted a SAWS Board member immediately and was told that the Board had not been properly briefed on this legislation. I immediately alerted our GEAA members, many of whom are SAWS ratepayers, requesting they contact their SAWS Board members to protest. Subsequently, a discussion of HB 1806 was added to the agenda of the SAWS Board meeting of 4/2/2019 where an amendment to limit the volume of water to be sold and to limit sales to counties contiguous to Bexar County was approved. Representative Tracy King resubmitted HB 1806 with these amendments.

Meanwhile, GEAA members and allies, including the Chairman of the Cow Creek Groundwater District, prevailed upon Representative Kyle Biedermann to submit additional amendments to HB 1806 to mitigate the impacts that wholesale of 6,000 acre feet of Edwards water would have on growth in Kendall County.

Although we are grateful to Representative Biedermann for amending the bill to accord a measure of local control in the allocation of Edwards water given for use in Kendall County under this bill, **we believe this legislation runs contrary to the original intent of the Edwards Aquifer Act and sets a bad precedent by allowing Edwards water to be exported outside the boundaries of the district.**

This bill is troubling on many levels.

Our GEAA members in Kendall County are concerned that sale of Edwards water will encourage high density development on the Edwards Aquifer Contributing Zone, which is also the Recharge Zone for the Cow Creek Aquifer. Contracts for SAWS water would enable development within Kendall County that would pose a threat to the water quality of both aquifers. For this reason, GEAA has consistently opposed SAWS service contracts over the Edwards Aquifer recharge and transitions zones, and the contiguous contributing zone.

GEAA members in San Antonio who are San Antonio Water Systems (SAWS) customers are also opposed to the sale of these Edwards Aquifer permits. When

alternative water supplies for City were being discussed, one of the selling points offered by SAWS CEO Robert Puente was that alternative supplies such as that afforded by the Vista Ridge project would allow us to keep more water in the Edwards Aquifer – good for downstream flows and for San Antonio’s long term water security. Although HB 1806 has been amended to limit the amount of AWS water for export to counties contiguous to Bexar County to 6,000 acre feet, we fear that this legislation, if passed, could be amended to allow for additional future exports.

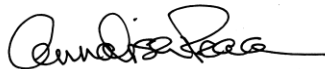
HB 1806 as originally filed to allow for the sale of unlimited supplies of SAWS Edwards Aquifer water caused great concern among the citizens of San Antonio.

GEAA has called upon San Antonio’s elected officials and SAWS Board members to begin a discussion over whether it is desirable or appropriate for SAWS to become a regional water supplier. As SAWS is a publicly owned utility, such discussion is warranted prior to granting SAWS authority to sell off permits for Edwards water to areas outside its service area.

We respectfully request that Governor Abbott veto HB 1806. **The original legislation that mandated management of the Edwards Aquifer was created under intense public scrutiny and represented an agreement among stakeholders that has served the citizens who rely on this water resource well. To allow for the Act to be altered in such a slap-dash fashion is bad public policy that merits rejection.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Respectfully,



Annalisa Peace
Executive Director
Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance