

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 9, 2019

Senate Committee on Water and Rural Affairs  
Chair: Sen. Charles Perry  
Vice Chair: Sen. Brandon Creighton  
Members: Sen. Carol Alvarado  
Sen. Nathan Johnson  
Sen. Lois W. Kolkhorst  
Sen. José R. Rodríguez  
Sen. Larry Taylor

RE: HB 1806

Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Rural Affairs,

The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA) opposes HB 1806 relating to the use of water withdrawn from the Edwards Aquifer by certain entities.

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 1809 has been amended to limit the amount of SAWS 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 you vote not to approve 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annalisa Peace". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Annalisa Peace  
Executive Director  
Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance