

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

April 5, 2019

House Natural Resources Committee
Chair: Rep. Lyle Larson
Vice Chair: Rep. Will Metcalf
Members: Rep. Alex Dominguez
Rep. Jessica Farrar
Rep. Cody Harris
Rep. Tracy O. King
Rep. Mike Lang
Rep. Poncho Nevárez
Rep. Tom Oliverson
Rep. Four Price
Rep. Ana-Maria Ramos

RE: HB 1059 and HB 4110

Honorable Members of the House Natural Resources Committee,

The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA) strongly supports HB 1059 relating to a biennial report on stormwater infrastructure in this state. HB 1059 is consonant with and complementary to the measures contained in HB 478 and HJR 81, legislation to create a new state flood infrastructure fund to provide state financial assistance for structural and nonstructural projects for flood mitigation and drainage. We are delighted that our Legislature is moving forward to address these issues and believe that HB 1059 will aid in achieving these goals.

GEAA has long promoted the use of green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) within our service area (which is among the most rapidly growing areas in the nation and is also recognized nationally as “flash flood alley”) as the most effective and cost effective method of mitigating non-point stormwater pollution. As we cover more of our state’s land with buildings and roads, we decrease the amount of ground that can absorb rain, consequently increasing stormwater runoff. As this runoff flows over roofs, parking lots, and yards, it picks up whatever’s on those surfaces — chemicals, oils, trash, animal waste — and carries those pollutants into our creeks, rivers, and lakes.

The Edwards is a karst aquifer, a type of aquifer that is especially susceptible to contamination because pollutants from runoff, leaks, spills, lawn treatments, and other sources can reach the water table within minutes and travel quickly through the aquifer with effectively no filtration. The need exists for an integrated approach to water management over the aquifer that will maintain the natural hydrologic regime to the extent possible, including the need to recharge the aquifer safely.

GSI systems are designed to work with the natural hydrologic patterns that exist before a site is developed. Low impact designs utilize small scale networked

landscape features that treat and clean stormwater runoff on site, as opposed to conventional systems that rely on drains and culverts to rapidly convey stormwater

off site. Treated runoff water can gradually infiltrate to groundwater or make its way to surface streams and rivers.

The measures outlined in HB 1059 are needed to determine where we are in terms of implementing GSI, and especially to identify impediments to the employment of GSI systems. GEAA's comments on the Texas Water Development Board State Flood Assessment¹ called on the State to ensure a more active state role for implementing water quality standards that include consideration of discharge impact on ecological functioning of receiving water bodies and that the State assist local stormwater utilities to better understand the role of vegetation and its maintenance in providing water quality benefits and flood resiliency by allowing the "correct" amount of stormwater to move through stream/river channels. We believe that HB 1059 will help the State achieve these goals and could substantially aid in the preservation of Texas water resources.

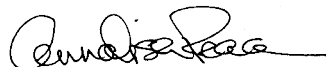
We also call your attention to HB 4110, which has been assigned to your committee. HB 4110 calls for TCEQ to conduct a study to evaluate and make recommendations for the regulation of on-site sewage disposal systems (OSSF) in the recharge zone of the Edwards Aquifer. This excellent bill would require TCEQ to submit a report on the effects, regulation, and best management practices for on-site sewage disposal systems on the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone by March 1, 2020. Should this bill pass, stakeholders, including groundwater management districts, river authorities, water suppliers, impacted municipalities and counties, and agency and academic experts will be able to work with TCEQ on new rules to better protect the Edwards from sewage contamination.

We ask that the House Natural Resources Committee schedule a hearing on HB 4110 as soon as possible. It is urgent for the Legislature to consider this bill during this session due to unprecedented growth over the Recharge Zone. Several agencies, including the Edwards Aquifer Authority, the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority, Canyon Lake Water Supply Company, and others have indicated that they support this legislation.

We urge you to send HB 1059 for a vote of the House and to schedule a hearing as soon as possible on HB 4110.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Respectfully,



Annalisa Peace
Executive Director
Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance

¹<https://aquiferalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/TWDB-FloodAssessmentComments10-2-18.pdf>