

Alamo, Austin, and Lone Star chapters of
the Sierra Club
Bexar Audubon Society
Bexar and Travis-Austin Green Parties
Bexar Grotto
Boerne Together
Bulverde Neighborhood Alliance
Bulverde Neighbors for Clean Water
Cibola Center for Conservation
Citizens for the Protection of Cibola Creek
Comal County Conservation Alliance
Environment Texas
First Universalist Unitarian Church of SA
Fitzhugh Neighbors
Friends of Canyon Lake
Friends of Castroville Regional Park
Friends of Dry Comal Creek
Friends of Government Canyon
Fuerza Unida
Green Society of UTSA
Guadalupe Riverkeepers
Guadalupe River Road Alliance
Guardians of Lick Creek
Headwaters at Incarnate Word
Helotes Heritage Association
Hill Country Alliance
Kendall County Well Owners Association
Kinney County Ground Zero
Leon Springs Business Association
Native Plant Society of Texas – SA
Northwest Interstate Coalition of NA's
Pedernales River Alliance – Gillespie Co.
Preserve Castroville
Preserve Lake Dunlop Association
Preserve Our Hill Country Environment
RiverAid San Antonio
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
Signal Hill Area Alliance
Sisters of the Divine Providence
Solar San Antonio
Texas Cave Management Association
Trinity Edwards Spring Protection Assoc.
Water Aid – Texas State University
Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation
The Watershed Association
PO Box 15618, San Antonio, Texas 78212

March 28, 2023

House Natural Resources

RE: Comments on HB 2941 for the 88th Regular Texas Legislature

Honorable Chairman King and Members of the House Natural Resources
Committee,

These comments are submitted on behalf of the 55 member groups of the Greater
Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA) in support of HB 2941. GEAA unites 25,000
Texans in 21 counties in advocacy of protections for the Edwards and Trinity
aquifers and the streams and rivers within these watersheds.

Recognizing that the Edwards Aquifer is extremely vulnerable to pollution, the
Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) regulates land use within
the Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zones to prevent pollution of this
irreplaceable resource that 2.5 million Texans rely on for potable water supplies.

It would therefore follow that the Rail Road Commission should afford the same
respect by requiring the owner or operator of an oil and gas pipeline to submit a
Water Pollution Abatement Plan (WPAP) outlining best management practices to
be implemented to protect water quality when a construction-related or post-
construction activity in the recharge zone of an aquifer has the potential for
polluting the aquifer and hydrologically connected surface streams.

Further, we agree that the Railroad Commission of Texas, in consultation with the
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, by rule shall adopt construction or
operational standards for water pollution abatement plans to include construction
standards adopted for protection of the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone by the
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The Edwards Aquifer is a karst aquifer characterized by faulted and fractured
Edwards limestone outcrop at the land surface. Due to the karst hydrogeology of
the Edwards Aquifer, chemicals that enter the system have the potential to rapidly
travel through the aquifer and contaminate down-gradient water sources in a short
period of time (hours to days).¹ Aquifers can be easily contaminated when
pollutants enter the recharge zone. The Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone is a
1,250 square mile area designated by TCEQ as the aquifer most vulnerable to
pollution in the state.

Concerns occasioned by significant fuel spills that occurred on the Edwards
Aquifer Recharge Zone (EARZ), including the 800-gallon Ram Texaco gasoline
spill in northern Bexar County and the 3,000-gallon Dyno-Nobel diesel spill near

¹Assessment, U. E. N. C. for E. Karst Hydrology and Chemical Contamination at
<http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recordisplay.cfm?deid=40644>

New Braunfels, led to the adoption of regulations at the state, local, and regional levels. San Antonio's municipal water system (SAWS) relies on the Edwards Aquifer for 63.5 % of potable water supplies. SAWS does not pretreat, nor does it have the infrastructure to pretreat, water supplies pumped from the Edwards. For this reason, the City of San Antonio approved Ordinance #81147² prohibiting the installation of underground fuel tanks over the EARZ in 1994.

In 2002 the Edwards Aquifer Authority banned the installation of fuel tanks above the EARZ as any spill would go directly into San Antonio's drinking water supply and the city has no means of treatment.³

One gallon of gasoline can contaminate up to one million gallons of water. Cleanup of fuel-contaminated soil and water can be extremely difficult and expensive. It is best to take precautions to ensure that the Edwards Recharge Zone is adequately protected.

We contend that Edwards water supplies are so valuable and, so extremely vulnerable to pollution, that the additional protection provided by HB 2941 is worthy of your approval.

We thank Representative Zwiener for filing this legislation and we strongly urge you to approve the passage of HB 2941.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.
Respectfully,

Annalisa Peace
Executive Director
Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance

²<https://aquiferalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/City-of-San-Antonio-Underground-storage.pdf>

³ <https://texaswater.tamu.edu/water-news/764-aaa-ready-to-sue-company-over-fuel-tank.html>