

February 9, 2026

Act Now Comal  
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 Neighborhoods for Clean Water  
Cibolo Center for Conservation  
Citizens for the Protection of Cibolo  
Creek  
Comal Conservation  
Comfort Neighbors  
Congregation of Divine Providence  
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  
Hays Residents for Land & Water  
Protection  
Headwaters at Incarnate Word  
Helotes Heritage Association  
Hill Country Alliance  
Kerr County Water Alliance  
Kendall County Well Owners Association  
Las Moras Springs Association  
Leon Springs Business Association  
Llano River Watershed Alliance  
Native Plant Society of Texas -- NB  
Native Plant Society of Texas -- SA  
Northwest Interstate Coalition of  
Neighborhoods  
Pedernales River Alliance -- Gillespie Co.  
Preserve Castroville  
Preserve Lake Dunlop Association  
Preserve Our Hill Country Environment  
River Aid San Antonio  
San Antonio Audubon Society  
San Antonio Conservation Society  
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 (SAFE)  
SEED Coalition  
Signal Hill Area Alliance  
Solar San Antonio  
Texans for Environmental Awareness  
Texas Cave Management Association  
Trinity Edwards Spring Protection Assoc.  
Water Aid -- Texas State University  
Watershed Association  
Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation

The Honorable Cody Harris, Chairman  
The Honorable Armando Martinez, Vice-Chair  
The Honorable Members Ashby, Barry, C. Bell, Buckley, Fairly, Gámez, J. Garcia, M.  
González, Romero, Villalobos, and Zwiener  
House Committee on Natural Resources

## **Re: Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance Comments on Groundwater Regulation and Management**

The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of the Edwards and Trinity aquifers, their springs, watersheds, and the Texas Hill Country that sustains them. Our alliance has 63 member groups across 21 counties in South-Central Texas. We work in this field to ensure the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of all those who rely on these sources of water.

GEAA submitted a version of these comments in the fall to the Speaker and committee members, and we respectfully ask for your continued consideration of and support for the following items related to groundwater regulation and management.

### **Groundwater Conservation District Authority**

Groundwater supplies throughout Texas are increasingly strained, over-permitted, and lacking key data and modeling. Groundwater conservation districts (GCDs) were created to regulate groundwater, but the rule of capture [“effectively stops them from doing so.”](#) GCDs are hamstrung in their ability to appropriately regulate groundwater due to the risk of major lawsuits; the threat of legal action often means GCDs are [“hesitant to regulate usage or put limitations on new well permits.”](#)

GCDs and well owners in West and South Texas and the Texas Hill Country are facing the threat of declining groundwater levels and dry wells. Central and East Texas well owners and GCDs are facing the [threat of large export permits](#) to the other parts of the state that will drawdown local supplies, potentially to unsustainable levels. As Texas faces a hotter, drier, and more populated future, some changes to the existing legal framework are needed to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of residents and the continuance of the Texas Economic Miracle. Texas is served by a patchwork of GCD jurisdictions with varying levels of technical expertise, financial resources, and authority. As demand for water continues to grow, there is a pressing need to identify best practices for improved coordination among GCDs and local jurisdictions to ensure that groundwater availability means long-term groundwater sustainability.

*The Legislature should study and hold hearings on enhancing GCD authority, technical expertise, and funding to effectively regulate groundwater withdrawals and exports. This study should include an examination of how the Legislature could update the Texas Water Code in order to absolve GCDs of liability for implementing pumping and export regulations and limits; see a version of proposed language [here](#). The Legislature should also re-examine and hear testimony on [HB 1690](#) (89R), [SB 2660](#) (89R), [HB 193](#) (89(2)), and [HB 215](#) (89(1)) – all of which would help ensure GCDs are well-equipped to protect and manage the state’s water supplies – and should evaluate best practices for improved coordination across GCDs.*

## Water Availability Regulations

The Legislature took positive steps forward this past session in responding to the many pressures facing Texas' water supplies. Even with the new bills passed and new funds created, Texas' explosive population growth and increasing aridity continues to place unsustainable pressure on groundwater supplies. The state should shift its mindset from one of availability to one of sustainability. Already, water utilities are having to turn down proposed developments due to a lack of water; springs and rivers that are foundational to local economies are enduring multiple years of drought; and aquifers are falling to near-record low levels. And at present, the groundwater availability certification process is insufficiently protective of local supplies.

Population growth and economic development are beneficial to the state in many ways, but any gains Texas receives from these boosts will matter little if there is not water to support them. Texas should [take heed of other Western states](#), where water shortages are [limiting development](#), [impacting agriculture](#), and [increasing costs](#).

*The Legislature should examine implementing requirements that the water availability certificate process must consider both groundwater and surface water; that they consider cumulative impacts on local supplies; that they use best available modeling practices and data; that they take into account the DFC and MAG of the local GCD; and that all new developments must submit a study. The Legislature should also study expanding the applicability of water availability certification for subdivision, industrial, and commercial developments.*

*The Legislature should examine expanding the required timeframe for water availability certificates to 100 years, up from the current 10 and 30 years, and adding a water quality provision. The study should include looking at requiring water utilities to submit a water availability report for their supplies every three years to the counties within their service area, with the report based on the best available modeling practices and data. Any hearing should include testimony from water utilities, water providers, GCDs, and city and county governments. The Legislature should also re-examine and hear testimony on [SB 1855](#) (89R).*

*The Legislature should also consider requiring subdivisions with tracts greater than 10 acres to submit a groundwater availability certificate, as well as consider granting counties and GCDs the explicit authority to review and approve the certificates before they are submitted to TCEQ and authorizing these entities to require a third-party audit.*

Thank you for your hard work and consideration of these important issues. Please consider the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance as a resource throughout the interim session; we are happy to provide testimony, connect you with experts in these fields, and provide additional research and resources. We look forward to working with you on these issues during the interim and the 90<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session.

Sincerely,



Annalisa Peace  
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Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance



Rachel Hanes  
Policy Director  
Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance