



## Member Organizations

Alamo, Austin, and Lone Star chapters  
Sierra Club  
AGUA  
Bexar Audubon Society  
Bexar and Austin Green Parties  
Boerne Together  
Cibolo Nature Center  
Citizens Allied for Smart Expansion  
Citizens for the Protection of Cibolo Creek  
Environment Texas  
Environmental Stewardship Committees  
of the Episcopal Church of Reconciliation  
& Episcopal Diocese of West Texas  
First Universalist Unitarian Church of  
San Antonio  
Friends of Canyon Lake  
Friends of Dry Comal Creek  
Friends of Government Canyon  
Fuerza Unida  
Headwaters at Incarnate Word  
Hays Community Action Network  
Helotes Heritage Association  
Helotes Nature Center  
Hill Country Planning Association  
Green Society of UTSA  
Guadalupe River Road Alliance  
Guardians of Lick Creek  
Kendall County Well Owners Association  
Kinney County Ground Zero  
Leon Springs Business Association  
Medina County Environmental Action  
Association  
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  
Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation  
Wimberley Valley Watershed Association

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April 10, 2017

Chair: Sen. Charles Perry  
Vice Chair: Sen. José R. Rodríguez  
Members: Sen. Brandon Creighton  
Sen. Bob Hall  
Sen. Juan Hinojosa  
Sen. Lois W. Kolkhorst  
Sen. Borris L. Miles

Honorable Chairman Perry and Members of the Senate Agriculture, Water & Rural Affairs committee,

On behalf of the fifty-two member groups of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA), I present these comments in support of S.B.1796, authored by José Menéndez.

During the past ten years I have had to learn way more about sewage than I ever wanted to know. GEAA has partnered with citizens in Comal, Medina, and Hays counties to protest applications for TPDES permits or amendments to TLAP permits that would allow discharge of sewage effluent into waterways that recharge the Edwards Aquifer.

In every case, our organization was approached to provide assistance to citizens opposed to issuance of direct discharge permits. Over the years, this has amounted to hundreds of citizens who were concerned about the negative impacts these discharges would have on their property values, their wells, and the recreational value of their Hill Country creeks and streams. These citizens have contribute their time and money to fight what they view as an unfair imposition on their property for the benefit of another party.

In 2008, the Belterra subdivision's application to discharge wastewater into Bear Creek was opposed by Hays and Travis counties, the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District and by 95% of the municipalities within that District. In their ruling, TCEQ Commissioners cited their reluctance to effect a rule change that should, in their opinion, be taken up by the State Legislature. That prompted the filing of H.B. 595 in 2009, which is essentially the same bill you are considering today.

Also in 2008, The Hills of Castle Rock subdivision in Medina County applied for a permit to discharge wastewater from 7,500 homes into San Geronimo Creek. GEAA and the San Geronimo Valley Alliance, a group of ranchers concerned about impacts to their wells, were joined by San Antonio Water Systems in contesting this permit on the basis that it would harm the quality of the water of the Edwards Aquifer. Additionally, both the SAWS Board of Directors and the City of San Antonio cited concerns about Hills of Castle Rock's plan to discharge into the San Geronimo Creek as among their reasons for denying SAWS water service to this subdivision.

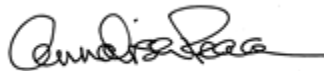
More recently, GEAA has joined citizens in Comal County in contesting TPDES permits for the Johnson Ranch subdivision, the Meyers Ranch subdivision, and the 4S Ranch subdivision, all of which would have ultimately drained into the Cibolo Creek - a major Edwards Aquifer Recharge feature. The Johnson Ranch permit is still being disputed. In the other cases we negotiated settlements to employ land application of the effluent. We are currently working with those who own property along Onion Creek to address the City of Dripping Springs discharge permit application.

I stress that passage of this bill will not prohibit development within the region. Lakeway and Marble Falls are growing rapidly and prospering under a 'no discharge' regime. Except the Hills of Castle Rock, which is now being developed by another entity, all of the aforementioned applicants are proceeding to develop their property using TLAP permits.

The common practice, recommended by experts in this field, is that of applying the treated effluent to land. Treated effluent could also be used to advantage by installation of gray water systems for non-potable use such as watering lawns. We realize that our region is growing, and that there will be additional development within these environmentally sensitive areas. We are asking you to ensure that new development respects existing property rights and does not compromise or degrade the quality of water in the Edwards Aquifer by adding your support to S.B. 1796.

Thank you for hearing testimony on this bill today. Please rely on GEAA as a resource regarding this and other bills related to protection of the Edwards Aquifer.

Respectfully,

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

Annalisa Peace  
Executive Director