

Alamo, Austin, and Lone Star chapters of the Sierra Club
Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas
Bexar Audubon Society
Bexar Green Party
Boerne Together
Cibolo Nature Center
Citizens Allied for Smart Expansion
Citizens for the Protection of Cibolo Creek
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
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 Nature Center
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
West Texas Springs Alliance
Water Aid – Texas State University
Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation
Wimberley Valley Watershed Association

March 24, 2017

Senate Finance Committee

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Sen. Kelly Hancock

Sen. Joan Huffman

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Sen. Robert Nichols

Sen. Charles Schwertner

Sen. Kel Seliger

Sen. Larry Taylor

Sen. Carlos Uresti

Sen. Kirk Watson

Sen. Royce West

Sen. John Whitmire

Sent Via e-mail

Honorable Senator Nelson and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

The fifty-two member groups of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA) oppose SB 1006, Relating to the eligibility of land used as an ecological laboratory for appraisal for ad valorem tax purposes as qualified open-space land.

The bill proposes substantial changes to the Ecolab program, a program that has been very useful in allowing access to riparian lands in order to conduct water research. We frequently work with colleges and universities in the twenty-one county Edwards Aquifer region on research projects related to water quality. These projects not only add to the body of knowledge pertinent to crafting best practices for preserving our Hill Country waterways; they serve as excellent opportunities for students to get hands-on experience that well prepares them for future employment.

Ecolabs give universities crucial access to private land, which is important since 97% of land in Texas is private. Most landowners also contribute to funding the research. Public and private colleges and universities in Texas have received over \$1.5M in funding from this program in the past 11 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on SB 1006.

Sincerely,



Annalisa Peace

Executive Director