

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 23, 2006

**CONTACT:** Adam Schurle (512) 479-9804  
Annalisa Peace (210) 320-6294

**Polluters Foul Texas Waters;  
58% Percent Exceeded Clean Water Act Pollution Limits in Recent 18-Month Period**

San Antonio— More than 58 percent of industrial and municipal facilities across Texas discharged more pollution into our waterways than their Clean Water Act permits allow between July 2003 and December 2004, according to *Troubled Waters: An analysis of Clean Water Act compliance*, a new report released today by Environment Texas and the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA).

“Polluters are using America’s waters as their dumping ground. Instead of solving the problem, the Bush administration is slashing the EPA’s budget and weakening critical clean water programs,” said Adam Schurle, Citizen Outreach Director for Environment Texas.

While the 1972 Clean Water Act has made significant strides in cleaning up U.S. waterways, the law’s goals of eliminating the discharge of pollutants into waterways by 1985 and making all U.S. waters safe for fishing, swimming and other uses by 1983 have not been reached. Today, more than 40 percent of U.S. waterways are unsafe for swimming and fishing. In Texas, at least 19 percent of rivers and 29 percent of lakes are impaired.

Using the Freedom of Information Act, Environment Texas obtained data on facilities’ compliance with the Clean Water Act between July 1, 2003 and December 31, 2004. Environment Texas researchers found that polluters repeatedly exceeded their permit limits, often by egregious amounts.

Additional findings include:

- 348 polluters in Texas reported more than 2000 exceedances of their Clean Water Act permits, ranking the state 2nd in the country for the most exceedances.
- Polluters in Texas reported 115 instances in which they exceeded their Clean Water Act permit by at least 500 percent over the legal limit.

Draft Quote

*“All Americans deserve clean water to drink and safe places to swim and fish. To clean up our waterways, this continuing pollution must stop,” said Annalisa Peace, Executive Director of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance.*

Environment Texas and GEAA noted that the findings are likely conservative, since the data analyzed includes only “major” facilities and does not include pollution discharged into waters by the hundreds of thousands of minor facilities across the country.

Environment Texas and GEAA called on the Bush administration to back off its efforts to weaken the Clean Water Act and to commit to strengthening enforcement of this landmark legislation. In addition, the groups called on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to move forward with staff recommendations to strengthen its penalty policy.

In order to achieve the goals of the Clean Water Act, Environment Texas and GEAA recommended federal and state officials do the following:

- **Increase EPA Funding** to put more environmental cops on the beat to identify and punish polluters violating their Clean Water Act permits, and to fully fund the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to help communities upgrade their sewer systems.
- **Protect all U.S. waters** by withdrawing the Bush administration's 2003 "No Protection" policy that eliminates Clean Water Act protections for many small streams and wetlands that feed and clean great waters, and supporting passage of the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act.
- **Strengthen the Clean Water Act** by preventing polluters from profiting from pollution, tightening permitted pollution limits, revoking the permits of repeat violators, and ensuring citizens full access to the courts.

"To protect public health and the environment, the Bush administration and TCEQ must hold polluters accountable for their contamination of America's waterways," concluded Schurle.

###

Environment Texas is a statewide citizens advocacy organization based in Austin.  
[www.EnvironmentTexas.org](http://www.EnvironmentTexas.org)

The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance unites thirty-two member organizations behind a comprehensive plan to protect the Edwards Aquifer, its contributing watersheds and the Hill County. To learn more visit [www.AquiferAlliance.org](http://www.AquiferAlliance.org) .