

June 4, 2019

Governor's Office

RE: Opposition to HB 1806

Dear Governor Greg Abbott,

Hill Country Alliance (HCA) and its supporters recognize and appreciate the critical work the Governor's office plays in advancing legislation that impacts the agricultural interests and municipal water supplies of Texas.

Furthermore, we acknowledge the tremendous effort and value that a broad spectrum of local stakeholders brought in the long and arduous compromise that created the Edwards Aquifer Authority Act ([EAA Act](#)) signed by the Governor in 1993. That federal court-mandated solution was the result of many years of negotiation and compromise by municipal, agricultural, and environmental interests to simultaneously protect Edwards Springs across the region -- and to protect the property rights of rural agricultural and urban municipal aquifer users.

One fundamental protection guaranteed to agriculture by the EAA Act is that Edwards Aquifer sourced water and water rights may not leave the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) boundaries. [HB 1806](#) would erode that fundamental protection by allowing Edwards Aquifer water to be transferred outside of the EAA's boundaries.

HB 1806 sets a dangerous precedent that would:

- Undermine the consensus-based Edwards Aquifer Authority Act;
- Undermine multiple existing local authorities bordering the EAA that are tasked with managing development to local rules;
- Reward a single developer who failed to secure local support or water supplies before creating a WCID as required by statute, and;
- Enable development that bypasses necessary and beneficial negotiations between elected officials at all levels of government and the developer community.

In order to support protection of the EAA Act and to support responsible development, HCA respectfully requests the veto of HB 1806. Though we appreciate the efforts that have been made to amend this legislation to provide volume limits and county officials with some ability to weigh in on the approval of water deals; our concerns about the precedent this legislation sets remain, and we respectfully request you consider the wider implications of this bill and veto.

Our comments reflect the collective vision of our supporters, stakeholders, business interests, and partners for the protection of the Hill Country's viability as a desirable place to live, today and for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have questions, please contact me at 512/694.1121.

Respectfully,

Charlie Flatten
Water Programs Manager, Hill Country Alliance

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cc: Matt Lara, HCA Board President; Katherine Romans, HCA Executive Director