



Paul Pape  
Bastrop County Judge

May 28, 2019

VIA Electronic Mail: [Julie.Frank@gov.texas.gov](mailto:Julie.Frank@gov.texas.gov)

Ms. Julie Frank, Policy Advisor  
Governor Greg Abbott | Office of the Texas Governor

RE: Veto Request – H.B. 1806 (relating to sale of water from the Edwards Aquifer) sent to the Governor on May 23, 2019.

Dear Ms. Frank:

I respectfully ask that Governor Abbott veto HB 1806. It undermines the local permitting process (by allowing the end user of the water to change without proper hearings) and sets a dangerous precedent for groundwater transfers.

As the Governor knows, SAWS has entered a groundwater supply contract (Vista Ridge) which obligates them to take delivery of up to 50,000 acre-feet of groundwater each year beginning in 2020. Their permit ask was based on their need and their claim that without this water, San Antonio could not meet their water demands of the future. This water is being mined from the Carrizo and Simsboro aquifers underlying parts of Burleson, Milam, Lee and Bastrop counties.

SAWS has determined now that they only require 35,000 acre-feet/year of the Vista Ridge water. Faced with an excess of 15,000 acre-feet of water per year, SAWS lobbied for the legislation in HB 1806 to allow them to sell water from their Edwards Aquifer supply to developers outside the Edwards district. SAWS actively pursued HB 1806 as a remedy to their problem, rather than renegotiate their contract with Vista Ridge for only the water they need.

If they are allowed to do so, it would undermine the entire permitting process by a local groundwater conservation district. Two guiding principles of permitting water to be exported from the district are 1) where that water will be going and 2) why the transfer is vital to Texas.

Senator Kolkhorst, who represents the citizens of the area where much of the water will be harvested, stated on the Senate floor, "*We thought that the contracts had been made because San Antonio couldn't grow. ... I'm not sure they all signed up to start supplying water beyond San Antonio. And I think this is a really bad precedent!*"

HB 1806 will set a bad precedent for unregulated transfers of groundwater which threaten Texas aquifers, and the millions of central Texans who rely on them. This legislation sets bad water policy. As County Judge of one of the counties where this water is coming from, I plead with you to veto this bad legislation and require that the ultimate use of any exported water be defined and vetted in the permitting process with the local groundwater conservation district. Please veto HB 1806.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Pape".

Paul Pape  
Bastrop County Judge