



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2019

TESPA & Hays County Citizens Deliver Rally Cry for Moratorium on Groundwater Permits

On June 27, more than a hundred Hays County leaders, landowners and local citizens gathered in support of groundwater and aquifer protection at a public Rally hosted by the Trinity Edwards Springs Protection Association (TESPA).

At the event, TESPAs delivered a solid program of facts and figures supporting the need for a temporary moratorium on large-volume groundwater permits. TESPAs and many Hays County citizens are urging the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District (BSEACD) to adopt a moratorium until additional science can further determine the sustainable yield of the Middle Trinity Aquifer and impacts to existing groundwater resources.

“The moratorium on large-volume pumping is an effective, common-sense approach to allow sufficient time for scientific studies and modeling that we can all rely on in order to protect our aquifers and groundwater,” said Patrick Cox, Ph.D., TESPAs board member.

While BSEACD does not define “large-volume,” TESPAs believes 15 million gallons a year, or 41K gallons a day, is a reasonable threshold. TESPAs leaders intend to discuss this in more detail with BSEACD staff. In the meantime, event attendees signed postcards addressed to BSEACD board members urging them to “Be Prudent. Press Pause. Avoid unreasonable impacts. Develop Science First.”

Concern for private, exempt water wells by area landowners grew as TESPAs shared new groundwater models showing the full range of potential draw down from the production permit being sought by Electro Purification LLC from its commercial well field near Driftwood in Hays County.

New drawdown models, requisitioned by TESPAs, show aquifer drawdowns of up to 200 feet at a distance five miles from the Electro Purification (EP) wellfield. That model reflects the best available science of outcomes if EP, a Houston-based water development company, is authorized to pump its requested 2.5 million gallons per day over the 30-year life of the project.

TESPAs and Hays County landowners are currently awaiting a contested case hearing to present evidence to an administrative law judge over the anticipated impacts from EP pumping 2.5 million gallons per day. BSEACD will make the ultimate decision whether to grant or deny the permit.

“This is one battle we can’t afford to lose,” said Hays County Commissioner Lon Shell who spoke at the TESPAs Rally.

Vanessa Puig-Williams, TESPAs executive director, presented information about the Needmore Permit, which is another large, pending application for groundwater production in Hays County near the EP project. Needmore will have its final hearing on July 29, 2019, at Buda City Hall when the BSEACD will consider whether to approve production of 289 million gallons a year. This would be the largest permit in the Trinity Aquifer within BSEACD’s jurisdiction.

“The threats to groundwater resources in Hays County continue to intensify,” says Vanessa Puig-Williams. “Production from both the EP and Needmore permits will compound drawdown in the area, likely causing impacts five miles away and together consuming all of the groundwater the Texas Water Development Board says is available to produce from the Trinity Aquifer within BSEACD’s jurisdiction. TESPAs will continue to work with the staff of BSEACD to ensure that private property rights, exempt wells, and groundwater resources are protected.”

TESPAs is a non-profit organization with a mission to protect the Trinity and Edwards aquifers from over pumping, the springs that flow from this interconnected system, and the property rights of landowners who depend on and wish to conserve this precious natural resource. TESPAtexas.org

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Attached are:

- TTIM Analysis Drawdown Map in Cow Creek segment of the Trinity Aquifer in Hays County
Source: Prefiled testimony of James A. Beach, P.G., Exhibit 810, Fig 6 <https://bit.ly/2KGVp5J>
- Photo 1: Crowd gathers to listen to TESPAs presentations on June 27, 2019. Photo by Tim Donnelly.
- Photo 2: TESPAs board member, Chris Elliott, points to the problem. Photo by Savanna Elliott.

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