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April 22, 2020

Commissioners Court Votes to Rescind Road Permits for Permian Highway Pipeline

Hays County Courthouse, San Marcos, TX (April 22, 2020) – On Tuesday the Hays County Commissioners Court voted following executive session to immediately rescind County road permits that allowed Kinder Morgan to cut through and drill underneath Hays County roads while installing its Permian Highway Pipeline.

Precinct 3 Commissioner Lon Shell said his motion was to prevent a similar occurrence that polluted groundwater wells in neighboring Blanco County when horizontal directional drilling damaged karst features, causing nearby groundwater wells to be contaminated with drilling fluid.

“My concern is especially for western Hays County because if karst features were impacted by boring it could take significant rainfall before contaminants are noticed in our groundwater,” Shell said. “I believe the pipeline company needs to better understand where various karst features are in order to protect our natural resources.”

The motion requires the permits to be rescinded until Kinder Morgan complies with the Texas Railroad Commission’s Notice of Violation for the damage done in Blanco County and provides a plan for moving forward that will prevent further impact to ground and surface water.

He also called upon Kinder Morgan to provide a detailed geology report for each proposed road crossing in Hays County to determine whether the site is underlaid by karst.

“We must take action to support good stewardship of one of our most precious natural resources, the water supply of our Hays County citizens and those in our neighboring counties,” County Judge Ruben Becerra said.

The Court also directed County staff to prepare and present a plan for the Court’s consideration outlining criteria for Kinder Morgan to follow so the company would be aware in advance of the County’s requirements. Shell noted that the plan could require the use of ground-penetrating radar

that would show where to avoid karst features, as well as the mapping of groundwater wells in a one- or two-mile radius.

Because Kinder Morgan is already working in Hays County, Shell directed the County's Transportation Department staff to visit the site to give notice of the revoked permits.

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