

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP PROTECT OUR AQUIFERS?

There is always something the public can do to help make sure our aquifers are sustainably managed for future generations. Today, the Texas Water Development Board needs to hear from you about two petitions that are pending before the Board. Comments are due March 19, 2012.

The TWDB hearing to gather evidence for and against the petition filed by End Op, L.P., a water marketer, was held on February 29. Environmental Stewardship's petition will be heard in Milano on March 7, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

The petitions were filed to challenge the way our groundwater management area (GMA 12 covers Bastrop, Brazos, Burleson, Falls, Fayette, Freestone, Lee, Leon, Limestone, Madison, Milam, Navarro, Robertson and Williamson counties) has calculated the drawdowns of groundwater levels they say we must tolerate over the next 50 years (euphemistically called "desired future conditions" or "DFCs"). The petition process is governed by rules.

One of those rules governs the ways "affected interested persons" are allowed to participate in the evidence-gathering by TWDB before it makes its determination of whether the DFCs are "reasonable."

-----If you live in any of the counties covered by GMA 12, and especially if you are a landowner or well owner,

-----if you are a user of the Colorado River or the Brazos River, either recreationally or otherwise,

-----if you have springs or streams on or near your property that are important to you,

-----if you are a user of water in any of the counties in GMA 12 and you are concerned about water marketing or water exports from your county, or have other concerns about water or water planning by GMA 12, and/or

-----if circumstances unique to you that are not described above make you concerned about the DFCs, or either of the two petitions,

then you are an affected interested person for purposes of the petition process, and you should make comments and/or submit additional documentation to TWDB that relate to the DFCs and your concerns about them.

BOTTOM LINE, IF YOU LIVE IN THESE COUNTIES AND YOU DRINK WATER, YOU ARE AN AFFECTED PERSON AND YOU SHOULD BE INTERESTED!

The general public may attend the hearings but no public comment is permitted at that time under TWDB rules. **But members of the public who are affected by, or interested in, the matters covered by the two petitions, may submit "written evidence in any form" to TWDB within 10 business days of the hearing dates.** "Evidence" is defined as "information,

consisting of testimony, written materials, material objects, or in any other form, that is relevant to the reasonableness of the desired future conditions.”

Additional written evidence, with specific reference to either or both petitions, may be submitted by mail, fax, hand delivery or email to the attention of Joe Reynolds at TWDB, as follows, **no later than end of business on March 14 for End Op related evidence, and March 19 for Environmental Stewardship:**

JOE REYNOLDS

Legal Division

Texas Water Development Board

P. O. Box 13231

Austin, Texas 78711-3231

email: Joe.Reynolds@twdb.texas.gov

Fax: 512.475.2053

Reference: [Environmental Stewardship’s] [End Op’s] petition appealing GMA-12’s adopted desired future conditions

IMPORTANT NOTE:

TWDB requires any submission to (1) be in the form of an affidavit (signed and notarized), if the affidavit contains your comments, or (2) have an affidavit attached to it, if your submission also includes documents, etc. (See the two sample forms below that you may download and use, or devise your own as long as it contains the required information.)

Exception for certain email submissions:

Ordinarily, TWDB would require email submissions to be converted to a “PDF” format to show your signature and the notary’s signature. TWDB also prefers any supporting documents to be in PDF format. However, TWDB will make an exception if the person does not have ready access to converting a signed affidavit and any supporting documents into PDF format for emailing back to TWDB.

In that case, you may simply email any documentation without benefit of the affidavit so long as your name, address or other contact information, nature of your interest in the proceedings, and a reference to the relevant GMA hearing (either End Op or Environmental Stewardship GMA 12 petition, or both) is included. Remember, if additional evidence is mailed, faxed or emailed in PDF, the signed and notarized affidavit should be included.

THE EASIEST WAY OF ALL TO COMMENT TO TWDB: A notary public will be available at Milano –if you leave your notarized comments with us, we will see that they are delivered to TWDB by the deadline.