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## **AGUA files lawsuit to protect the Edwards Aquifer**

Today, AGUA is filing a federal lawsuit to protect the Edwards Aquifer and endangered species living in the Aquifer's recharge zone. It names, as defendants, the Federal Highway Administration, Amadeo Saenz, Jr. (TxDoT), the US Fish & Wildlife Service and Terry Brechtel (Alamo RMA).

Our lawsuit involves the massive US 281/Loop 1604 interchange that defendants plan to construct over one of the most vulnerable areas of the aquifer recharge zone. Our lawsuit details how defendants violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Instead of complying with laws intended to protect the people of San Antonio and their water supply, defendants are recklessly forging ahead using a "Categorical Exclusion" to avoid required environmental studies and safeguards. In doing so, they are exploiting the same loophole in the law that BP used to hurry up and drill its "Deepwater Horizon" well, and our federal agencies are standing by idly and rubber-stamping their plans.

As AGUA director Richard Alles puts it: *"It's a sad day when government bureaucrats make up for years of poor planning and mismanagement by threatening the drinking water supply for millions of people."*

This project is located at the intersection of two hazmat routes. But ARMA, in its CE application, failed to even study the danger of a hazardous material spill contaminating the water that 1.8 million people drink. Nor did it consider how construction will increase the likelihood of a spill.

Even though San Antonio is in imminent danger of becoming a non-attainment city, ARMA has ignored the additional air pollution that will be caused by construction delays and refused to consider longer term increases from the additional car and truck traffic this huge project will create.

AGUA president Enrique Valdivia notes: *"Cutting corners on transparency and required environmental studies hurts everyone. Unfortunately, that is the route that ARMA has chosen, leaving us no choice but to bring this action."*

*"Calling this project an "interchange" is fundamentally misleading. The project incorporates more than eight miles of added lanes along 1604 and 281, with years of construction delays and added air, noise and water pollution. These impacts are significant and citizens deserve both honest answers and clear solutions for minimizing these impacts.*

Please visit our website at [www.aquiferguardians.org/1604x281.htm](http://www.aquiferguardians.org/1604x281.htm) to read the complaint for declarative and injunctive relief.

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AGUA (Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas) is a coalition of concerned individuals and citizen groups working together to preserve the environmentally sensitive Edwards Aquifer. We educate about, and take action to protect the Aquifer and the quality of life of residents and the sustainability of businesses in the Edwards Aquifer region. We work to protect the natural and cultural heritage and public health and safety of the region. AGUA is a non-profit organization.

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