

For immediate release December 1, 2005

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**Aquifer Guardians And People For Efficient Transportation, Inc.  
Sue to Stop Toll Road System Over Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone**

*Environmental analyses fail to consider any alternatives to massive toll highway with frontage roads that will exacerbate sprawl over recharge zone and pollution of aquifer*

Today, Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas (AGUA), long-time advocates for protection of the Edwards Aquifer, and toll road watchdog People for Efficient Transportation, Inc. (PET) joined forces to oppose the proposed expansions of U.S. 281 and Loop 1604 north of San Antonio. The lawsuit asserts that an environmental impact statement should be prepared for the expansion of highways over the recharge zone and that alternatives should be considered to minimize the harmful effects of urban sprawl in an environmentally sensitive area. Highways and urban sprawl in the area are fragmenting habitat for the endangered golden-cheeked warbler, contributing to air quality degradation, and polluting the aquifer.

“This project has taken off without any consideration of how such a massive development will impact our water supply.” said Annalisa Peace, of AGUA. “After all, the people of San Antonio have twice voted to tax themselves to protect this region. And we aim to see that their preference in this matter is respected.”

The Edwards Aquifer region is being overwhelmed by uncontrolled and unplanned residential growth. The proposed toll roads will greatly accelerate these harmful trends and the highway agencies are moving forward without taking any meaningful look at the implications of their actions.

“TxDOT’s obsession with charging tolls on existing roads is an unfair financial hardship for taxpayers, and increases the environmental impacts of the roads because of TxDOT’s policy to provide frontage roads as a free alternative,” states local transportation expert Bill Barker. “Texas is the only state in the Union that builds frontage roads as a matter of policy. Every other state has found better ways to manage access, and frontage roads should not be used in this case because they negatively impact safety and flow, as well as encourage sprawl and strip mall development over the recharge zone and into the Hill Country.”

"Poll after poll show Texans opposing tolls on already funded public roads. The unaccountable nature of shifting our freeways to tollways not only produces more bureaucracy, but it increases the footprint and double or triples the cost of the project. Those costs get passed on to Texans. Our Governors 'Freeway Tolls' will negatively effect our environment as traffic congestion will increase on frontage roads with drivers that won't or can't pay the daily \$5 - \$10 to drive each way to work, school or shop." said Sal Costello, founder of People for Efficient Transportation Inc.

The Edwards is a karst aquifer and therefore is highly vulnerable to water pollution because surface water quickly enters the aquifer through recharge features without significant filtration. Chlorinated solvents, toxic metals, and pesticides are regularly detected in the Edwards Aquifer, at times in concentrations that threaten human health and sensitive plants and animals. Many of these pollutants, such as benzene, are common components of highway run-off.

The plaintiffs are represented by John Fritschie of Save Our Springs Alliance. SOS Alliance’s litigation docket and information on the adverse affects of highways can be found at [www.sosalliance.org](http://www.sosalliance.org). For more information on AGUA go to [www.aquiferguardians.org](http://www.aquiferguardians.org); PET go to [www.stopdoubletax.com](http://www.stopdoubletax.com)

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