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For Immediate Release

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HB 2729 and HB 3656 signed by Governor Abbott

San Antonio, TX – As of Friday, June 14, 2019 the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) secured the signing of two bills, HB 2729 and HB 3656, by Texas Governor, Greg Abbott. Both bills will effectively become laws on September 1, 2019.

On Friday, June 14, HB 2729 by Representative Ina Minjarez was signed by Governor Abbott, which relates to the administration, duties, and operation of the EAA. The EAA Act will contain administratively relevant portions of the Chapter 36 Water Code, including: a correlation to the attorney’s fees provisions within Chapter 36; a requirement for biennial reporting by the EAA to the Edwards Aquifer Legislative Oversight Committee; and a limitation on the annual increase of aquifer management fees to eight percent per year for non-agricultural permit holders.

In addition, Monday, June 10, HB 3656 by Representative Andy Murr was signed by Governor Abbott and will further amend the EAA Act by allowing for the conversion of base irrigation groundwater rights based on changes in land use due to development. The bill allows the EAA board to make rules to process base irrigation groundwater conversions; defines *development* for the purpose of considering base irrigation groundwater conversions; allows the transfer of converted base irrigation groundwater within the EAA region; affords due process to EAA permit holders by subjecting base irrigation groundwater conversion applications to a contested case hearing process; and validates the past actions of the board relating to these conversions.

“In the context of the big picture of the sustainability of the Edwards Aquifer, these changes to the EAA Act eliminate a number of uncertainties that could have clouded the effective management of the Aquifer well into the future,” said Roland Ruiz, EAA General Manager.

The EAA manages, enhances and protects the Edwards Aquifer, a major groundwater system serving approximately 2 million South Central Texans.

More information can be found at www.edwardsaquifer.org.