



**Barton Springs
Edwards Aquifer**
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

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For more information, contact: Kirk Holland, General Manager

Aquifer District Proposes Additional Rules to Protect Aquifers During Extreme Drought

July 27, 2009 – The Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District Board has initiated a formal rulemaking process to respond more effectively to extreme and prolonged droughts and to manage more equitably its groundwater resources. These rule changes are especially timely, because the aquifers in the District are already strained in the current severe drought and are expected to suffer further, both from higher than usual water demands during the dry, hot summer and from a continuation of the La Nina climatic conditions, which suggest no replenishment is likely until well into the fall months.

The newly proposed rules establish a new, deeper, Exceptional Stage Drought with mandatory 40% curtailment in pumping for all permitted users; differentiate among several aquifers as to drought management measures and other regulations; specify additional curtailments for certain types of uses if the aquifer water levels fall to historic low levels; and also propose a new temporary transfer permit system that allows certain permittees to contractually transfer water pumpage rights under certain conditions during extreme drought to minimize socioeconomic impacts, provided a net benefit to the aquifer is created by the transaction.

“There is nothing the District can do to create new groundwater in the current drought,” cautioned Kirk Holland, General Manager of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District. “This is a shared resource, and all users have a shared interest in making sure every gallon of water is used for essential purposes and in a responsible fashion. Simply put, we will never get a second chance to save water that isn’t conserved in this drought. The rule changes we are now proposing deal with the

previously unthinkable situation where even the stringent reductions in demand under our existing rules may not be sufficient to avoid adverse impacts on various users and uses of the aquifer.” Holland noted further that “the District’s permittees and their end-user customers have largely complied so far with the District’s mandatory 30% reductions, but that the additional curtailments required under the proposed rules will be difficult for all those who use the aquifer, will cause some hard decisions to be made about personal priorities, and could require use of alternative water sources for either substitute or supplemental supplies at greatly increased cost, if available at all. “

A statutory 20-day notice period has just begun, and the District Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed changes to the Rules on August 27, 2009. The proposed changes in both tabular summary and markup forms may be viewed on the District website, at www.bseacd.org/rules, or are available for inspection and copying at the District’s office. Written comments will also be accepted at least until the public hearing is held. For more information, please contact the District office at (512) 282-8441.

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