



**Barton Springs  
Edwards Aquifer**  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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**Aquifer District Seeks to Continue Its Opposition to City of Dripping Springs's Wastewater Discharge Plan in Contested Case**

At its March 22, 2018, meeting the Board of Directors of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District voted unanimously to seek party status in the upcoming contested case against the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's proposal to issue a permit to allow the City of Dripping Springs to directly discharge its treated sewage into Onion Creek. This stream is the major recharge source for the groundwater supplies of the Edwards Aquifer. TCEQ had previously denied party status to the District, contrary to the recommendation of its own Office of Public Interest Counsel. The TCEQ Commissioners did not provide a basis for the denial of the District's party status. An administrative law judge in the State Office of Administrative Hearings will be holding a preliminary hearing to decide, among other things, who will be affected parties in the contested case, and the District will now be providing its rationale in that forum as to how the District will be adversely affected.

"The District Board ultimately decided that if it did not continue its opposition to the Dripping Springs's plans allowing direct discharge and seek party status with SOAH, tens of thousands of Central Texans who depend on the Edwards Aquifer as a sole water supply would not be represented in the contested case and would lose their voice in this decision-making," remarked Kirk Holland, the District's Interim General Manager. He went on to note, "the District is confident that the science will show conclusively in a more objective legal forum that the water of impaired quality flowing downstream and degrading groundwater supplies of two major aquifer systems will in fact harm our constituents. This risk to human health and welfare is unnecessary, because alternatives are available to the City of Dripping Springs that do not require a direct-discharge permit."

The preliminary hearing by SOAH has not yet been scheduled.

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*BSEACD is a groundwater conservation district charged by the Texas Legislature to preserve, conserve, and protect the aquifers and groundwater resources within its jurisdiction, which includes parts of three Central Texas counties. It is governed by a Board of five elected directors and staffed with hydrogeologists, groundwater regulatory compliance specialists, environmental educators, geospatial systems specialists, and administrative support personnel.*