



RESOLUTION PROVIDING COMMENTS TO GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA 9 REGARDING JOINT PLANNING EFFORTS TO ADOPT DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

- WHEREAS**, Chapter 36, Section 108 of the Texas Water Code provides for the joint planning by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) of various Groundwater Management Areas consisting of Groundwater Conservation Districts; and
- WHEREAS**, Hays County contains the full boundaries of the Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (HTGCD), which participates in Groundwater Management Area 9 (GMA 9); and
- WHEREAS**, GMA 9 districts shall every five years consider groundwater availability models and other data or information for the management area and shall propose for adoption Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) for the relevant aquifers within the management area; and
- WHEREAS**, the year 2021 represents a joint planning year for TWDB to update its 2016 DFCs for GMA 9; and
- WHEREAS**, state law allows the County to offer comments on behalf, and in the best interests, of its citizens to inform and influence the determination of DFCs by HTGCD and fellow districts within GMA 9, and
- WHEREAS**, the Trinity Aquifer is the relevant aquifer that feeds and interacts with the Blanco River and serves as the primary water supply source for many citizens of Hays County, and is managed by GMA 9; and
- WHEREAS**, Texas Water Code Sec. 36.108 requires that GMA 9 districts shall consider aquifer uses or conditions, water supply needs, hydrological conditions, environmental impacts including spring flow and other interactions between groundwater and surface water, impact on subsidence, socioeconomic impacts, interests and rights in private property, DFC feasibility, and any other relevant information; and
- WHEREAS**, the comment period for the 2021 joint planning effort of GMA 9 districts continues through June 30, 2021;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Commissioners Court of Hays County:

The Desired Future Condition for the Trinity Aquifer stated as an “increase in average drawdown of approximately 30 feet through 2060” does not adequately protect availability of groundwater in GMA 9, as evidenced by declining groundwater levels over the last decade. With no new demographics until Census 2020 is released later this year and no update of groundwater modeling, the GMA districts should take a more conservative view and reduce the drawdown toward zero to protect the aquifer until new and more refined data can be incorporated.

During the five years since the 2016 DFC update, population growth and rapid development in the eastern and southeastern districts have raised serious questions about modeled available groundwater, as wells fall to historic lows in mild drought conditions. Disparity in groundwater drawdowns across districts argues for greater attention to specific measures and additional DFCs related to spring flows. Health of spring flow is a measure of overall groundwater system health and directly observable to use as a drought trigger to protect groundwater resources.

Modeling to create the Blanco River Aquifer Assessment Tool (BRAAT) comes as a response to dye trace and other studies that have established much more complicated groundwater and surface water interactions. Until the BRAAT is completed, GMA 9 should account for obvious stresses on the groundwater system and the recent historical record of drawdowns greater than 100 feet in pockets near Blanco, Boerne, and Kerrville, during severe drought.

Mining the aquifer according to outdated modeling of drawdown effects is unsustainable. The baseline trend of groundwater health argues instead for reasonable steps to reduce pumping and preserve access to groundwater for essential use. Replacements for groundwater exist—rain-water harvesting, graywater reuse, aquifer storage and recovery, and direct potable reuse—and deserve greater focus and potential promotion through incentives.

The Hays County Commissioners Court respectfully asks the districts of GMA 9 to reconsider hydrological conditions rather than continuing an unsustainable status quo. The adverse environmental impacts of current DFCs on spring flow and interactions between groundwater and surface water have become clearer and more frequent and severe of late. Socioeconomic hardship will follow, compounded by a pace of development that only seems to be increasing.

The Blanco River, Onion Creek, and Cypress Creek depend on support from healthy groundwater. The time has come to preserve and protect groundwater, take steps to use less and reuse more, and earnestly seek sustainable alternatives. Significantly reducing the average drawdown for the Trinity Aquifer as a GMA 9 DFC is the reasonable and prudent opportunity today.

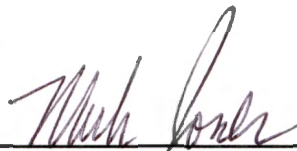
ADOPTED THIS THE 22<sup>nd</sup> DAY OF JUNE 2021



**Ruben Becerra**  
Hays County Judge



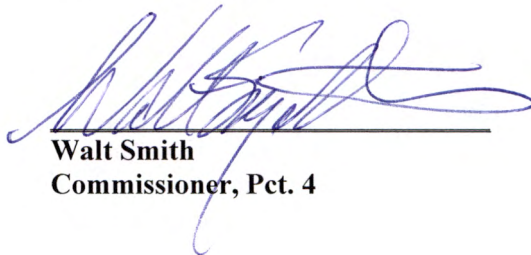
**Debbie Gonzales Ingalsbe**  
Commissioner, Pct. 1



**Mark Jones**  
Commissioner, Pct. 2

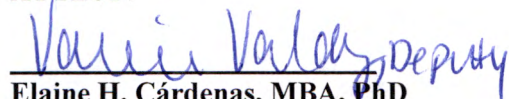


**Lon A. Shell**  
Commissioner, Pct. 3



**Walt Smith**  
Commissioner, Pct. 4

ATTEST:

  
**Elaine H. Cardenas, MBA, PhD**  
Hays County Clerk

