TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

The rising STAR *of Texas*

October 19, 2016

Ms. Luana Buckner, Chair
Edwards Aquifer Authority
900 E. Quincy
San Antonio, Texas 78215

Dear Ms. Buckner:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed 2017 Budget of the Edwards Aquifer Authority. As you know, Texas State University is a partner with the Authority in the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan and we have appreciated our relationship with both Board and staff of the Authority in this regard.

Having said that, I was extremely dismayed to learn that the draft 2017 budget, as proposed would underfund the Habitat Conservation Plan by approximately $3.7 million dollars. This proposed action would seem to abandon the commitment to a capped operating reserve as laid out in the Funding and Management Agreement, jeopardize the ability to address important elements of the Plan, especially in drought years, and, quite frankly, represent a breach of trust with the other Plan partners. It is further conceivable that this action could jeopardize the security of the plan with the US Fish and Wildlife Service with respect to the protection of endangered species inhabiting the aquifer itself.

I know I need not remind you that the existence of the Authority is due to the presence of these species and the Habitat Conservation Plan has been seen across the United States as an enlightened, stakeholder based effort crafted over several years.

May I take this opportunity to respectfully urge that the Board of the Edwards Aquifer Authority reject this proposal and fully fund the Habitat Conservation Plan without drawing down the reserve. This course would both preserve the security of the plan itself and the trust partners to the Plan have placed in each other.

Yours very sincerely,

Andrew Sansom

Andrew Sansom, PhD
Executive Director
The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment.

THE MEADOWS CENTER
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