

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 1143

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Hearing Date: April 20, 2021 8:00 AM

Annalisa Peace

Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance

San Antonio, TX

The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance is FOR HB 1143.

Anna Farrell-Sherman, Clean Water Associate

Environment Texas

Austin, TX

Dear Committee,

On behalf of the organization Environment Texas and our members across the state, I would like to express our support for Representative Ramos' HB 1143.

Texans love to jump into cold water on hot days, but all too often our state's beautiful rivers, lakes and beaches are not as safe as they seem. Pollution, rainfall events, and more can cause unexpected blooms of toxic algae that make our waterways unsafe for swimming.

Beachgoers are currently protected through the online publication of data indicating the danger of pathogenic bacteria on our beaches, but the danger is not just limited to beaches. According to Environment Texas research, 49% of Texas freshwater sites were unsafe for swimming on at least one testing day in 2017, but that data is not easily available online until much too late to prevent swimmers from getting sick. Swimming in contaminated water can lead to gastrointestinal illness, as well as respiratory disease, ear and eye infections, and skin rashes.

Texans looking to swim in any of our creeks, rivers, and springs should be protected in the same way that beachgoers currently are. HB 1143 would make information on the safety of Texas' waters publicly available so that Texans can make safe and informed decisions about when and where to swim, fish, and recreate. Please support HB 1143 to give Texans greater transparency around what's in our water and keep us safe when we swim.

Thank you for your consideration,

Anna Farrell-Sherman
Clean Water Associate
Environment Texas

Vanessa Puig-Williams

EDF/Vanessa Puig-Williams

Austin, TX

EDF supports HB 1143. It will protect public health by making data on water quality more transparent and accessible.

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Donnis Baggett

Texas Press Association

Bryan, TX

The Texas Press Association supports HB 1143. Texans deserve to know what is in the recreational waters of our state. Posting pathogen data on the TCEQ website makes perfect sense. The data will be a good resource for Texans planning recreational outings and for journalists who cover the environment and outdoor sports. We thank Rep. Ramos for filing this pro-transparency bill.