

6. FACT SHEET

MANAGEMENT OF GROUNDWATER IMPACTS

CONCERN: Facilities are purchasing property and drilling wells that deplete the water table without any input or consideration for their consumption and how they impact others' access to water.

TCEQ regulates groundwater quality, but does not regulate the *amount* of groundwater APOs use; however, in many cases groundwater used at the Aggregate Production Operation (APO) is regulated by a local groundwater district.

State agencies, such as the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the Railroad Commission of Texas and others, have regulatory responsibilities for activities relating to groundwater quality protection. Specifically, TCEQ establishes the level of water quality to be maintained and regulates sources of pollutants that may affect groundwater. However, state law does not provide TCEQ or any other state agency the authority to manage or regulate groundwater pumpage and use. Groundwater conservation districts are units of local government with the authority to regulate the spacing and production of water wells. These locally-controlled administrative agencies are the state's preferred method for groundwater management.

There are almost 100 groundwater conservation districts operating through Texas. See e.g., *Groundwater Conservation Districts of Texas, Texas Water Development Board (Map)*.

When working within the community, whether in quarries, along river beds or close to populated communities, TACA members follow best practices to ensure that the environment is protected and that its operations are run safely and within – and many times – exceeding requirements by the many agencies that regulate them.

WATER CONSUMPTION AND USE

CONCERN: Rock quarries consume large quantities of water and adversely impact the water table.

In some cases, Aggregate Production Operations (APOs) use large quantities of water, but these operations typically recycle their water, allowing for an efficient and conservative use of this resource. APOs' groundwater use is regulated to protect against adverse impacts to the water table.

As noted, groundwater conservation districts regulate how much, how often and for what purpose groundwater may be used. These districts are responsible for ensuring adequate groundwater availability, even in drought conditions. In cases where APOs utilize groundwater, these operations often recycle their water using clarifiers, flocculants and series of settling ponds. APOs have no incentive to “pump wells dry.” Rather, it is to their benefit to responsibly use water. In fact, APOs often recycle more water than other “industries,” such as golf courses, amusement parks and overly-irrigated landscapes common to high-end commercial and residential developments.