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## **INJECTION WELL PROTESTANTS, APPLICANT STRIKE ACCORD ON ALLOWING FOR ADDITIONAL WELL TESTING**

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CONROE – The saga over a proposed Conroe-area injection well took a positive turn this week with the filing of an agreed motion to temporarily suspend the contested case.

TexCom Gulf Disposal, LLC agreed with the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District, the City of Conroe and Montgomery County, and the individual resident protesters that additional testing should be performed on the existing well on Creighton Road before the parties proceed with the hearing on the TexCom applications.

TexCom currently has applications pending with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for four injection disposal well permits.

The agreed motion to temporarily suspend the case, filed today at the State Office of Administrative Hearings in Austin, allows TexCom to proceed with a request to the TCEQ to conduct additional testing on the well before the parties proceed with a second round of evidentiary hearings ordered by the TCEQ Commissioners last December.

Lone Star Groundwater Conservation Board president Richard Tramm says the agreed motion represents a positive development in the long-running challenge to the TexCom permit applications.

“The District has since day one argued that this case should be considered using hard science, not theory or best-guesses,” Tramm said. “By abating the case to allow TexCom to conduct more testing on the existing well, we are giving ourselves a chance to learn more hard science about that well and how the TexCom injection project will impact groundwater quality in Montgomery County.”

While this development represents a rare agreement between TexCom and the Montgomery County protestants, the fight is not over against the injection well applications, says Kathy Turner Jones, General Manager of the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District.

“This [the agreed motion] is indeed a positive step forward, but TexCom still has to prove that its proposed injection project will not harm the groundwater quality of Montgomery County. So far, they have not done that,” said Ms. Jones. “This proposed testing has the potential of telling us even more about the impacts to water quality from the TexCom wells. The District will be carefully scrutinizing the test itself and the results in our constant efforts to protect the long-term viability of Montgomery County’s groundwater supplies.”

The parties were scheduled for a second evidentiary hearing in Austin this July. With the suspension of the case, however, that hearing date will most likely be reset to a later time.