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## Lawmakers Convene Hearing to Scrutinize Aquifer Water Project

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East Texas legislators are holding a public hearing to examine a divisive proposal to pump enormous volumes of water from the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer, a project that has sparked deep concern among rural communities over long-term consequences for local wells and land.

State Representative Cody Harris, a Republican from Palestine, called the meeting to ensure residents have a voice in what many see as an overreach by private interests seeking to profit from public resources. The hearing, scheduled at the Texas Capitol, will take place before the Texas House Natural Resources Committee and is set to begin at 1 p.m.

The proposed plan would extract billions of gallons of groundwater each year, potentially depleting the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer, a vital water source spanning much of East Texas. Critics argue this project prioritizes urban consumption and corporate contracts over the rights of rural landowners, who depend on the aquifer for agriculture and daily living.

Many local officials and property owners have voiced strong opposition, warning that unchecked withdrawals could lower water tables, damage ecosystems, and undermine regional stability. Supporters of the project claim it could help meet growing demand in larger cities, but opponents counter that the long-term costs to rural communities have been downplayed or ignored.

Representative Harris emphasized the importance of protecting local resources. “This hearing is about transparency and defending the interests of the people who live on this land,” Harris said. “We cannot sit back while our aquifer is put at risk for someone else’s gain.”

The Texas House Natural Resources Committee is expected to hear testimony from residents, hydrologists, and advocacy groups. Lawmakers have indicated that further legislative action may follow if the project proceeds without adequate safeguards.