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Save Our Springs Alliance Files Suit Against CTRMA to Obtain Public Information on Controversial MoPac South Expansion

Austin, TX — Save Our Springs Alliance (SOS) has filed legal action against the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) to compel the release of public information relevant to CTRMA’s proposed billion-dollar MoPac South Expansion. The lawsuit, filed in Travis County District Court, is based on CTRMA’s refusal to provide factual data and traffic modeling analyses that underpin CTRMA’s public claims on improving traffic flow and avoiding any “significant” environmental damage made during its recent and ongoing public engagement process.

The proposed MoPac South Expansion would add up to 6 to 8 lanes along an 8-mile stretch through the heart of Austin, running directly over the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone from Enfield Road to Slaughter Lane. This project threatens iconic landmarks and public spaces, including Lady Bird Lake, Zilker Park, Austin High School, the Barton Creek Greenbelt, and Barton Springs. Its years-long construction and expanded footprint will harm air and water quality, public and student health, and critical habitat of the endangered Barton Springs and Austin Blind Salamanders.

The lawsuit follows CTRMA’s repeated refusal to fully respond to three separate public information requests made by SOS under the Texas Public Information Act. Each of these requests were denied, with CTRMA citing “deliberative process” or “draft document” privileges, a TPIA exception intended to protect internal policy discussions—not factual or technical data.

The Texas Attorney General’s office issued preliminary opinions supporting CTRMA’s denial; however, these opinions are not binding on courts and, as SOS argues, are often misapplied. Texas courts have repeatedly affirmed that the “deliberative process” exception does not shield factual information or technical observations from public disclosure.

“How is the public supposed to provide meaningful input in the environmental review process if the CTRMA won’t share the data they are relying on?” said Bill Bunch, SOS Executive Director.

SOS is seeking expedited judicial relief to compel CTRMA to release the requested factual and technical data immediately. In the lawsuit, SOS argues that transparency is essential for evaluating a project that will affect our environment, neighborhoods, and quality of life for generations.

“This is about accountability,” Bunch added. “The public has a right to know the basis for a massive, proposed toll road expansion located directly on top of multiple and highly vulnerable public trust resources. By state law and basic principles of good government, the CTRMA can’t pretend they want help from the public in evaluating the proposed project and potential alternatives but then keep secret almost all of the information they are relying on.”