

Hill Country Counties Unite



Get Involved to Help Shape Our Future

Like any good business, county governments must have the tools and revenue to plan for their future economic vitality. The Texas Hill Country region, with its fragile natural resources, is experiencing rapid population growth. The most conservative estimates forecast the region's current population of 3.1 million to climb to at least 4.3 million by 2030. This trend has created numerous resource, safety, infrastructure and financial challenges.

In 1997, the Texas Legislature, acknowledging the unique nature of the Texas Hill Country when they passed SB 1. The region's Priority Groundwater Management Area recognized the special groundwater needs of the Texas Hill Country. Water planning processes have since been established to begin evaluating and managing both surface water and groundwater supplies. However, because of limited county authority, hands are tied to fully address long-term groundwater needs. HB 3265, introduced by Representative Patrick Rose will take steps to address the following issues.

Safe Roads

Growth does not pay for itself. The cost of infrastructure exceeds the capacity to keep up with necessary services for a growing population. For example, new development has led to rapid degradation and crowding of county roads in counties with limited ability to fund improvements.

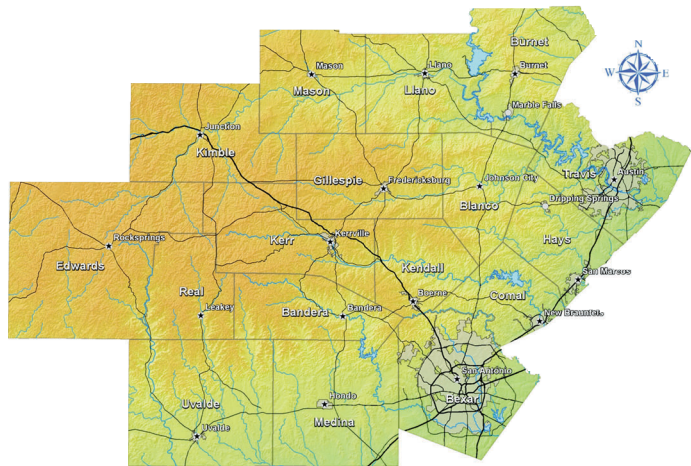
Solution: Safe Roads Fund. A dedicated fee to be collected from developers and used to improve and/or construct arterial roadways and drainage facilities to mitigate impact of subdivision and commercial developments.

Buffers

Incompatible industrial and commercial land use threatens neighboring property values and negatively impacts residents



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health and safety. For example, County Commissioners have no authority to protect surrounding property values from issues of water quality, noise, safety and air quality when industrial uses locate next door.

Solution: Buffers. Protect existing uses such as farm, ranch and residential use from new commercial and industrial uses by giving counties specific authority to require "buffers" between incompatible land uses.

Density Limits

Because of the region's topography, climate and reliance on groundwater, development in the Hill Country impacts drainage infrastructure, ground and surface water-quality, aquifer levels and aquifer recharge capabilities.

Solution: Density Average Limits. Add specific authority to establish, when necessary, the total number of lots or minimum lot size within a total amount of acreage to address drainage, water quality and quantity, fire protection, law enforcement and traffic impact issues.

We Need Your Help

Kerr County Judge Pat Tinley said it best "This should have been done years ago. We knew the growth and the challenges that come with growth were on the horizon." Hill Country County Coalition was formed because we all know that if we as county governments do not step up to the challenge of protecting property values and quality of life, we will have failed our citizens and ultimately the Great State of Texas. For more information contact Hays County Judge Liz Sumter at lizsumter@co.hays.tx.us or Kerr County Commissioner Jonathan Letz at jletz@co.kerr.tx.us.