

For Immediate Release

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To the editor,

In a recent speech to the Texas Public Policy Foundation, Governor-elect Greg Abbott had some things to say that should leave the people of the Texas Hill Country uneasy. Stating that some Texas communities' efforts to protect the health and environment of their citizens amounted to "California-izing" our state, Abbott rejected the validity of a local community's right to regulate specific activities that are felt to denigrate the community as a whole. Invoking the "property rights" mantra to support his position, his thinly veiled warning gave notice that as governor, he would work on behalf of special interests to protect them from any regulatory attempts at the local level to hold them accountable for environmental damage or significant disruption to the general quality of life in those communities.

Texans living in the Hill Country have a deep and abiding understanding of the importance of clear, flowing streams, heritage trees, trash-free landscapes, and a calm, quiet environment. We also have a very strong belief in property rights and the responsibilities that accompany those rights. As communities of this great state, we have an obligation to set rules that are reasonable and specific to protect our interests, not only as individual property owners, but as citizens. This is not "collectivism", as Mr. Abbott describes it, this is the way Texans have done things from the get go.

Those of us fortunate enough to live here and own land in the Hill Country understand the nature of the threat we face from aggressive, unregulated urban sprawl. We consider ourselves stewards of a great legacy to be passed on to future generations. Mr. Abbott's emphatic notice that he will work to prevent

local communities from being able to do what is reasonable and necessary through the democratic process to protect our land and our communities should disturb us all. It portends state government overreach that would prevent us at the local level from setting any rules we see fit to define our communities and protect ourselves. The Governor-elect should not take action that would diminish our local communities' right to self-governance.

Leo Tynan
Hill Country Alliance
2015 Board President

The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country. Visit us at www.hillcountryalliance.org.