

education
conservation
cooperation



Date: 5.6.2013

To: Texas House Natural Resource Committee Members
From: Hill Country Alliance
Contact: Christy Muse, 512.560.3135. christy@hillcountryalliance.org

Re: Support for SB 598

The Hill Country Alliance respectfully submits support for SB 598 - designation of the headwater segments of several Hill Country rivers as being of unique ecological value.

This initiative comes with support and recommendation from the Region L Water Planning group and is in keeping with previous legislative designations of such unique streams in other planning regions.

These stream segments, collectively, epitomize the pristine, clear flowing, and remarkably beautiful waters for which the Texas Hill Country is widely famous. The Hill Country Alliance is grateful for the opportunity to support this legislation and urges its passage by this Committee. It will raise public awareness of the need to be good stewards of these natural treasures.

The Hill Country Alliance is dedicated to ensuring for future generations an opportunity to enjoy the unique features of the Hill Country region, including the countless spring-fed streams, its multi-ethnic and agricultural heritage, and spectacular scenic beauty.

HCA's Guiding Principles:

Encourage responsible water practices - The economy of the Hill Country and land values are dependent upon the water needs of today being balanced among current users, e.g. ranchers, development and the environment, in such a way that does no harm to the streams and aquifers.

Inform the friends of the Hill Country - A key to solving our region's challenges is to work collaboratively with all interested stakeholders in order to make readily available honest and fair information, along with opportunities for participation in decisions.

Nurture unified support for innovative policy changes - While the actions needed to sustain the Hill Country's natural features vary across the region - from the rapidly urbanizing southern and eastern portions, to the vast open spaces on the western and northern edges - there is a shared interest in respecting private property rights and encouraging locally grown solutions to complex issues through education.

Support economic development that is compatible with the Hill Country's unique features - A key to keeping our Hill Country a special place for generations to come is to promote sources of income for landowners and businesses so that ensuing generations are motivated to keep ranches intact and small towns functional.