

For Immediate Release

March 28, 2025

County leaders meet in Austin to discuss potential state legislation impacting Hill Country communities

Despite recent rains bringing welcome relief to parched soil and dry creek beds, Hill Country leaders remain focused on the region's numerous water challenges. On March 26, 2025, more than 40 County officials and staff representing seven counties across the Hill Country gathered for a meeting in Austin to discuss how to represent constituent interests at the Texas Legislature, how to protect against bad bills, and how to defend water supply for Hill Country citizens.

Organized by Commissioners Stephen Germann (Guadalupe County), Jen Crownover and Kevin Webb (Comal County), Andra Wisian (Kendall County), and former Commissioner Lon Shell (Hays County), the workshop constituted the fourth such gathering of Hill Country leaders. Presentations focused on topics most critical to natural resource management, such as water supply, wastewater and stormwater quality and management, land use, the aggregate industry, and battery storage.

The group included county commissioners, engineers, planners, and groundwater conservation district managers from Comal, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Hays, Kendall, Travis, and Williamson counties. These leaders represent some of the fastest growing counties in the country. Joined by former State Representative Andrew Murr, Director of Constituent Services for State Senator Donna Campbell's office Sonya Chapa-Weber, Comal County's Criminal District Attorney Jennifer Tharp, and Hays County lobbyist Denise Davis, the workshop empowered participants to navigate the Texas Legislature for their constituents and provided updates on key bills moving through the Texas Senate and House of Representatives.

"None of this was taught in Texas Government class," said Comal Commissioner Kevin Webb. "That's why this workshop was important. If we want to protect our communities and encourage responsible development, we have to be able to navigate the Texas Legislature on behalf of our constituents."

The day started with an overview of the legislative process from former State Representative Andrew Murr, followed by a series of bill updates on key pieces of potential legislation that would most impact the Hill Country. After lunch, Hill Country Alliance staff moderated a panel featuring Denise Davis, Jennifer Tharp, and Andrew Murr highlighting best practices on engaging with legislators and staff. After the program concluded, participants continued onto the Texas Capitol for meetings with committee clerks and Hill Country legislative offices.

"A record-breaking 9,460 bills were filed at the Texas Legislature this year," said Grace Gilker, Hill Country Alliance Communities Program Manager. "That's absurd to expect one person to keep up with all of them, especially County Commissioners who are already busy serving their constituents. By working together, this coalition of county leaders ensures that nothing slips through the cracks and that the Hill Country's voice is heard at the Capitol."

The County-to-County workshops are an ongoing collaboration driven by host commissioners and supported by nonprofit partners Hill Country Alliance, Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance, National Wildlife Federation, Comal Conservation, the Cibolo Conservancy and the Cibolo Center for Conservation.

About: *The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization, bringing together a diverse coalition of partners to preserve the open spaces, starry night skies, clean and abundant waters, and unique character of the Texas Hill Country. Learn more at hillcountryalliance.org.*

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Photos:



County to County Workshop participants hear from Jennifer Tharp, Denise Davis, and former Texas State Representative Andrew Murr.