



January 27, 2025

Representative Emil Bergquist
Chair of House Local Government Committee

RE: Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 2025

Chairman Berquist and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony in opposition to HB 2025 on behalf of myself and the Hays City Commission. HB 2025 is an overhaul of more than 60 years of statutes used by cities and counties to make planning decisions and investments. Changing the law comes with significant consequences, none of which are accounted for in the bill. The City of Hays has worked very closely with Ellis County over the years to draw the boundaries of the ETJ in such a manner that it preserves Hays' ability to grow in a logical and cost-effective manner, while protecting the land rights of those in the unincorporated area. At this time, I do not see a problem that needs to be addressed.

A change of this magnitude needs significant study before consideration. I am concerned about the impact to:

- Municipal utility agreements and arrangements;
- Interlocal agreements;
- Projects currently bonded or in planning stages;
- State and federal regulatory practices, particularly utility and telecommunications;
- Metropolitan or regional planning commissions; and
- Joint city and county infrastructure agreements within the three-mile zone.

Subdivision regulation is important for controlling land use. This includes everything from street location to parks to flood protection. State law regulates the ability of cities and counties to enact these regulations within the three-mile boundary, also known as ETJ (extraterritorial jurisdiction).

The EJT also exists to protect counties from unfettered expansion of a city's boundaries. The rules and regulations in place within this zone provide agreement and cooperation between cities and counties. It properly discourages cities from just annexing these areas.

County commissioners have the ability to stop acts by a city within the three-mile zone. The current system is collaborative and gives counties authority and input over the process. If there are counties not actively engaged in the process, that needs addressed with them. Every citizen in a county who lives in an ETJ has representation through their county commissioners, who have direct oversight into the processes and actions taken by cities in the zone.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sandy Jacobs'.

Sandy Jacobs
Mayor, City of Hays