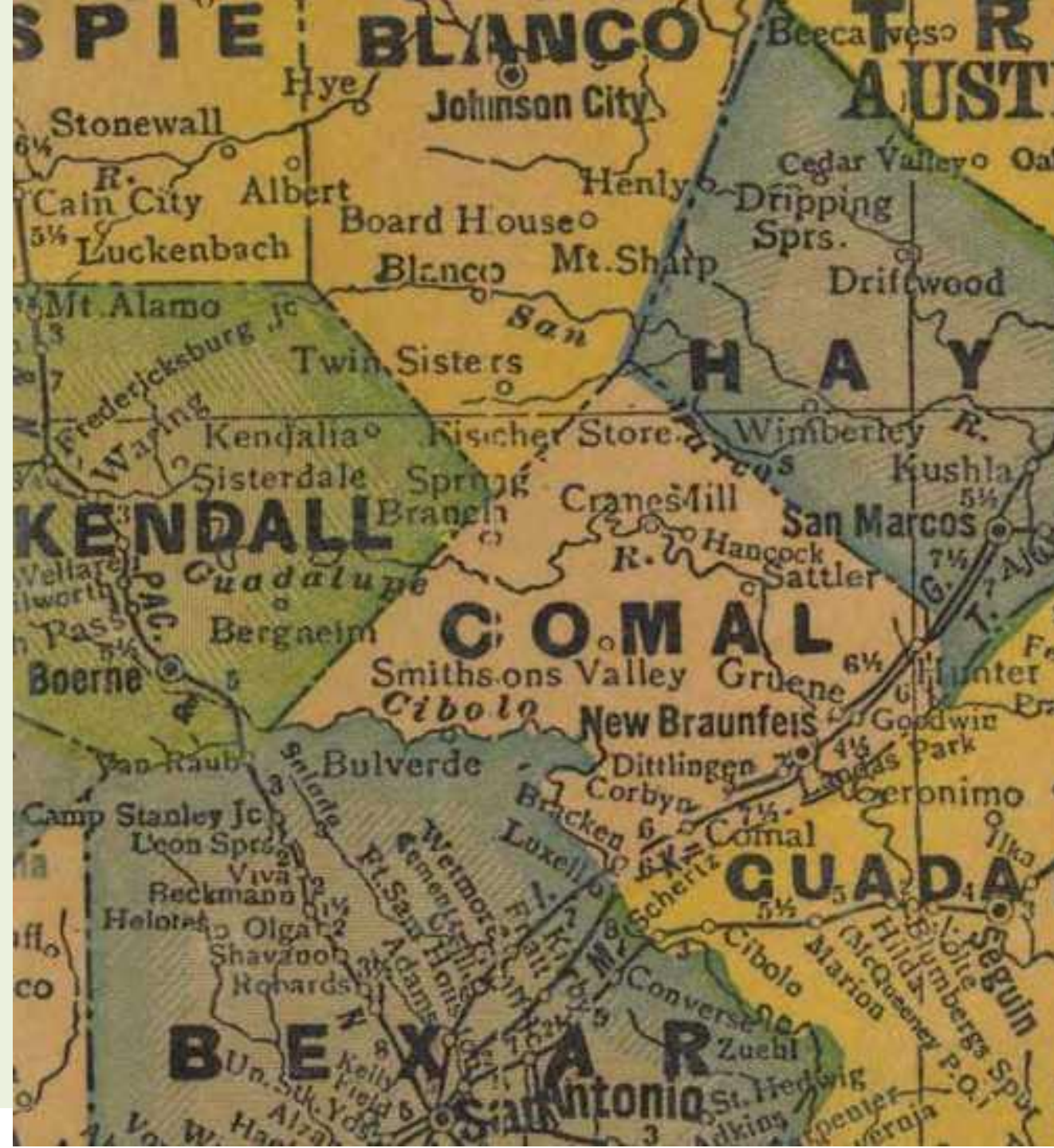


# Local Control Options for Hill Country Counties



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June 5, 2018

Many of the problems we've just seen are addressed within cities through zoning and municipal ordinances.

In Texas, counties have very limited authority.

- Counties lack the authority to manage stormwater and control flooding at the local level
- Without any mechanism to require that new developments pay for themselves, all citizens pay for new infrastructure to accommodate growth
- Counties cannot preserve the health, safety, and quality of life for their citizens by prohibiting incompatible land uses
- Counties are not given the tools to protect critical watersheds that replenish local karst aquifers, which are exceptionally vulnerable to pollution
- Counties are not given adequate tools to set minimum standards for water and wastewater infrastructure and emergency services

# Past Legislative Attempts

**2005** 79<sup>th</sup> Session

- [SB 142](#) (Wentworth)
- [HB 477](#) (Casteel)

**2007** 80<sup>th</sup> Session

- [HB 3447](#) (Rose, Howard, Hildebran)

**2009** 81<sup>st</sup> Session

- [HB 3265](#) (Rose, Doug Miller, Gallego)

## What could new legislation include?

- A list of possible tools that a Commissioners' Court might choose to have

These additional powers would be helpful in Texas' fastest growing counties:

- The ability to set standards for water or wastewater systems
  - The ability to require minimum fire suppression systems
  - The ability to require improvements to streets and roads
  - The ability to require a minimum amount of open space or imposing a limit on the amount of impervious cover for aquifer recharge and stormwater management
  - The ability to require vegetative buffers or adopt other measures to minimize conflict between incompatible land uses
  - The ability to assess impact fees that can pay for new infrastructure required to serve new developments
- A requirement that a Commissioners' Court must place any proposed new powers on a ballot for county residents to vote.
  - No new powers would accrue to a county without county citizen approval.

For more information about the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance

visit [www.AquiferAlliance.org](http://www.AquiferAlliance.org)

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