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A radical, environmentally destructive bill is set for a hearing this Wednesday morning. This legislation will impact every city in Texas. In San Antonio, developers will be free to clear-cut trees and ignore rules to protect the Edwards Aquifer.  We're asking Sierrans to immediately **contact the House Committee on Land & Resource Management** to voice your opposition to [HB 5217](https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=88R&Bill=HB5217), Simply contact the committee members (below), before the [hearing](https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/88R/schedules/html/C3602023041908001.htm) on Wednesday morning, and tell them you are **opposed to HB 5217**.  Alternatively, you can submit your comments, until the hearing is adjourned, through the [House Public Comment (texas.gov) webpage](https://comments.house.texas.gov/home?c=c360). House Committee on Land & Resource Management  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Position** | **Member** | **Phone** | | **Chair:** | [Rep. DeWayne Burns](mailto:dewayne.burns@house.texas.gov) | (512) 463-0538 | | **Vice Chair:** | [Rep. Glenn Rogers](mailto:district60.rogers@house.texas.gov) | (512) 463-0656 | | **Members:** | [Rep. Cecil Bell, Jr.](mailto:cecil.bell@house.texas.gov) | (512) 463-0650 | |  | [Rep. Keith Bell](mailto:keith.bell@house.texas.gov) | (512) 463-0458 | |  | [Rep. Brad Buckley](mailto:brad.buckley@house.texas.gov) | (512) 463-0684 | |  | [Rep. Evelina “Lina” Ortega](mailto:paulina.tamayo@house.texas.gov) | (512) 463-0638 | |  | [Rep. Ron Reynolds](mailto:deandre.jackson@house.texas.gov) | (512) 463-0494 | |  | [Rep. Mike Schofield](mailto:mike.schofield@house.texas.gov) | (512) 463-0528 | |  | [Rep. Carl O. Sherman, Sr.](mailto:carl.sherman@house.texas.gov) | (512) 463-0953 |  What exactly does the bill do? HB 5217 will allow landowners to unilaterally release their property from any Texas city's extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ). It would nullify **410,000 acres** of San Antonio's tree preservation ordinance and **46,000 acres** of its aquifer protection ordinance (see picture at bottom). What's at stake? This bill would let developers clear-cut trees, even giant heritage oaks, anywhere in the ETJ. Since the vast majority of property inside San Antonio's (CoSA's) city limits is already developed, the ETJ is where nearly all development of raw, natural land occurs. In other words, if this bill passes, CoSA's tree ordinance will be all but worthless.  In addition, developers could ignore the 15% impervious cover limit prescribed by the aquifer protection ordinance, as well as protections for **creeks, caves and recharge features**. There are approximately 46,000 acres of recharge zone in the ETJ. While some of that land is already developed, there are still thousands of acres of natural land available for future housing subdivisions and commercial buildings. The bill is unfair to taxpayers The taxpayers of San Antonio have spent hundreds of millions of dollars buying 175,293 acres of [land and conservation easements](https://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/Parks/Edwards%20Aquifer/Website%20Area%20Map.pdf?ver=2023-03-06-104509-260) to protect the Edwards Aquifer. This bill will give recharge zone developers, whose properties discharge contaminated runoff, a free ride by exempting them from aquifer protection rules. Taxpayers will bear the entire burden of protecting the aquifer. Map of San Antonio's ETJ San Antonio ETJ map  *San Antonio's ETJ, shown in green, extends 5 miles past its city limits* The Myth of "Regulation without Representation" This bill is founded on the premise that, because residents in the ETJ cannot vote in city elections, they shouldn't be subject to city regulations. There are several flaws in this premise.  **First, limited-liability corporations, and homebuilding corporations** from places like California, Michigan and Dallas, can't vote in city elections anyway. The vast majority of ETJ residents **have no city regulations to comply with**. San Antonio’s tree and aquifer protection ordinances apply only to developers/builders.  **Second**, ETJ residents can't vote because they don't pay city taxes. Yet, they are free to take advantage of natural areas, city parks, streets and venues that city taxpayers paid for.  **Third, there simply is not any "regulation without representation"**. ETJ residents are represented by their County Commissioners on ETJ regulations. Any city development codes applicable to the ETJ are authorized by "interlocal agreements" adopted by their County Commissioners Court (example: [Comal County/CoSA agreement](https://cceo.org/subdivision/documents/ILA-SanAntonio.pdf)). | | | | | | |