



August 29, 2025

The Honorable Dustin Burrows  
Office of the Speaker  
P.O. Box 12910  
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Speaker Burrows,

We write to you today on behalf of three of Kerr County's longest-standing youth camps, Camp Waldemar – est. 1926, Camp Stewart – est. 1924, and Vista Camps – est. 1921. Collectively, we have served generations of Texas children for over a century, shaping young lives through resilience, leadership, and community. Our camps employ local residents, sustain small businesses, and contribute millions of dollars annually to Kerr County's economy.

According to the *Texas Camps Impact Study (2023)*, camps across the state contribute more than **\$4 billion annually** to Texas' economy. Kerr County, as the “heart of camping in Texas,” is one of the largest beneficiaries of this industry. Yet today, that future is at risk.

The combination of devastating floods and the heavy financial burden proposed under new state regulations presents an impossible challenge. Legislation including a 100-year floodplain prohibition would require us to rebuild cabins, while also not being able to operate and generate income. Collectively, our camps would face **millions of dollars in mandated rebuilding costs** for cabins subjected to the prohibition that did not sustain damage by recent flooding. These additional burdens would come on top of already significant flood repairs, operational expenses, and existing loans. For any one of us, this would be devastating; for Kerr County as a whole, the loss would be catastrophic.

If our camps are forced to close, the impact would extend far beyond our gates:

- **Dozens of local jobs** would be lost, along with vital seasonal opportunities for young people.
- **Local businesses and vendors** that depend on camp activity would see significant declines.
- **Kerr County families** would lose a cornerstone of their culture and economy.
- **Thousands of Texas children** would lose a place to grow, heal, and thrive.

We want to be clear: safety has always been and will remain our top priority. We support the enhanced provisions for emergency planning and staff training in Senate Bill 1 and House Bill 1.



We are committed to working with lawmakers to strengthen standards that protect children. But the costs of compliance must be met with partnership and support.

We grieve with the families who have lost so much, and we share the same commitment to ensuring every child is safe.

We ask you to work with us to find a safe and professionally analyzed solution through the Texas Water Development Board for the 100-year floodplain prohibition. Additionally, if camps are state mandated to rebuild these structures, we ask that we are allowed to operate during the rebuild process. We believe there must be meaningful financial support, whether through insurance, state grants, or other funding mechanisms, so that the burden does not fall solely on families, camps, and communities. To go another summer without being able to operate and generate revenue, while also covering rebuilding costs is simply not feasible and will likely force our camps to close.

We love our community, we love this great state, and we love the children that we have nurtured all these years. We know that we can't do this alone and we come to you to ask for your help and guidance. Together, we can preserve the economic backbone of Kerr County, protect jobs, and ensure future generations of children can continue to grow in the safe, life-changing environment of camp.

With gratitude,  
Meg Clark, Camp Waldemar  
Silas "Jeeper" Ragsdale, Camp Stewart  
Kathy Ragsdale, Camp Stewart  
Justin Hawkins, Vista Camps

Cc. Members, Texas House of Representatives