



June 18th, 2026

Chairman Meyer and Members
House General Investigating Committee on July 2025 Flooding Events
Texas House of Representatives

RE: Written Testimony on July 2025 Flooding Events

Chairman Meyer and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the July 2025 Flooding Events.

The July 2025 Hill Country flooding was a tragedy that claimed lives, devastated families, and left Texans demanding answers. As the Legislature reviews the findings of multiple investigations, Texas Policy Research urges lawmakers to focus on accountability, transparency, and effective public policy grounded in evidence rather than emotion or hindsight. The committee's work should examine emergency preparedness, communication systems, flood warning capabilities, regulatory oversight, and decision-making before and during the disaster. Texans deserve a full accounting of what occurred and where improvements can be made. At the same time, lawmakers should also evaluate the state's policy response to the tragedy.

During the special sessions that followed the flooding, the Legislature enacted sweeping new requirements for youth camps. Texas Policy Research cautioned at the time that portions of the legislation, while well-intentioned, risked creating significant implementation challenges and unintended consequences for camps across Texas. Subsequent events suggest those concerns were not unfounded.

Multiple camps reported difficulties complying with certain statutory requirements, particularly those related to internet infrastructure and connectivity standards. The resulting concerns became significant enough that state leaders, including the Speaker of the House and Lieutenant Governor, publicly indicated that camps could satisfy the "spirit of the law" while broader compliance issues were addressed. This development raises an important policy question. If compliance with statutory requirements is not actually necessary in practice, lawmakers should carefully examine whether portions of the legislation imposed mandates that proved more burdensome or less workable than anticipated.

Texas operates under the rule of law, not the rule of discretion. Texans generally do not have the option of complying with the "spirit" of tax law, election law, environmental law, or occupational licensing law. If statutory requirements are unworkable, the proper remedy is legislative amendment, not informal reinterpretation.

The committee should therefore consider whether aspects of the post-flood legislative response adequately accounted for operational realities facing camps across Texas. Effective public policy requires a willingness to revisit legislation when implementation reveals shortcomings that may not have been fully anticipated during the legislative process. This is not an argument against safety standards. Safety, accountability, and preparedness are essential. Rather, it is an argument for policies that are evidence-based, enforceable, practical, and capable of improving outcomes without creating unnecessary burdens or unintended consequences.

The best way to honor those lost is not simply to enact more regulations, but to ensure that both existing and future policies are effective, targeted, and grounded in facts. Texans deserve accountability where mistakes were made, transparency throughout the investigative process, and a commitment to reforms that genuinely improve public safety.

For Liberty, For Texas!

Jeremy D. Kitchen
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