



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

HERALD-ZEITUNG.COM | WEEKEND, MARCH 11-12, 2023

Growth must be balanced — or Texas will be lost

My name is Mark Friesenhahn. I was born in San Antonio in 1950 and grew up on a small farm between San Antonio and New Braunfels — near where the busy IH-35 corridor now stands. I am a life-long Texan and proud of living “deep in the heart of Texas.”

But I am worried we are losing our beloved Texas to its massive growth. Our state is one of, if not the fastest growing state in the nation, and it is showing.

Central Texas was very rural in 1956 when I started my education in a one-room schoolhouse. Later, I completed my formal education in Austin with 40,000 other students. Along the way, our elders taught us to respect the land and, “Leave it in better condition than we found it.” As a farmer today, I continue to take this responsibility seriously.

Over the last 4-5 years, I have come to realize that our leaders at all levels (government and industry) are not doing this. They are promoting massive growth without due consideration for the infrastructure and natural resources needed to support the growth. Ask any of them; they will tell you about their grand housing or commercial and industrial development plans and “conservation efforts” to facilitate their plans. Pay attention to what they say. You will not hear discussion of matching growth with infrastructure capacity and available natural resources. Sure, we need infrastructure and natural resources to support our growth, but where are these going to come from?

Simply stated, we are on a collision course with infrastructure overload and resource shortages, both of which will negatively impact our beautiful Texas. Is this what we want and deserve?

Think about the concerns (see several on the attachment to this letter) and seek hard answers from your leaders/legislators. Now is the time to contact them since the 2023 legislative sessions are underway in Austin. I’m frustrated as I watch housing developers and big business take advantage of Texas, using inadequate and deficient rules to promote growth while our leaders and legislators support this at the expense of our quality of life. Let me be clear: I’m not against big business; in fact, big business provided me a challenging and rewarding career. We need equity and balance of priorities to better protect our beloved Texas for our children, grandchildren, visitors, and new residents.

Balancing growth with resources and infrastructure is not too much to ask for and we need to press our leaders to address these concerns.

Mark Friesenhahn, New Braunfels