

- SUBJECT:** Construction of county-owned buildings without municipal approval
- COMMITTEE:** Land and Resource Management — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Walker, Crabb, Bosse, F. Brown, Hardcastle, Howard, Krusee, Mowery, B. Turner
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Mark Mendez, Tarrant County Commissioners Court
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Local Government Code, sec. 212.903 allows counties with a population of 2.8 million or more to build or renovate county-owned buildings on municipal land without notifying or obtaining a permit from the municipality. Counties must use their own personnel for such projects, and all projects must be inspected by a registered professional engineer or architect licensed by the state. A still county must comply with municipal building code-standards for such projects. Harris County is the only county eligible under this section.
- DIGEST:** HB 2626 would lower the population eligibility requirement for Sec. 212.903 of the Local Government Code to 1 million or more. This would allow Dallas, Tarrant, and Bexar counties to build or renovate county-owned buildings without permission of a municipality.
- This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house.
- SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 2626 would improve the efficiency of building and renovating county facilities. Currently, the need to secure municipal permits or approval often delays changes to projects that are underway. This bill would allow counties to proceed with important mid-course corrections to projects in a timely manner, without jeopardizing the ability of municipalities to enforce compliance with health and safety standards.

Harris County has used the exemption successfully. Large counties such as Dallas, Tarrant, and Bexar have the staff , the resources, and the expertise necessary to work on their own buildings without municipal oversight.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Cities should have the power to review and authorize projects in all stages of development within their jurisdictions. It would not in the best interests of a city or its residents to relinquish authority to counties over development projects.