



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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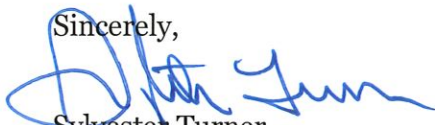
To the Members of the Texas Legislature:

In 2013, during the 83rd Texas Legislature, SB 748 by Senator Jane Nelson and Representative Charlie Geren created Section 351.1015 of the Tax Code to allow a municipality with a population of at least 650,000 but less than 750,000 to use a certain tax revenue to fund a convention center facility, a multipurpose arena or venue, and related infrastructure. The bill also allowed applicable municipalities for a period of up to 30 years to receive the incremental growth in state sales and use taxes, state hotel occupancy taxes, and state mixed beverage taxes collected by hotels within the project financing zone. Later, SB 660 by Senator Royce West and Representative Rafael Anchia added the City of Dallas as a municipality to which Section 351.1015 applied

Like Dallas, which will begin constructing a new 2.5-million-square-foot convention center in 2024 and Fort Worth, who constructed Dickies Arena, a 14,000-seat multipurpose arena, the City of Houston seeks to modernize and expand the George R. Brown Convention Center (GRB). The GRB is a 1.2 million-square-foot convention center and ranks among the 10 largest convention centers in the nation. Over the years, Houston has had the pleasure of hosting several conventions, most notably the National Association of Petroleum Engineers (14,800 attendees), Comicpalooza (42,800 attendees), FIRST Robotics (130,000 attendees), Lonestar Volleyball (32,000 attendees) and many others. To remain competitive and continue attracting large conventions such as the 2028 Republican National Convention, for which we are a finalist against Miami, it is imperative that the City of Houston, through its convention and marketing local government corporation, Houston First Corporation (HFC), be able to utilize Section 351.1015 to make the necessary improvements and expand the GRB. Houston First Corporation also seeks to add the definition of project-associated infrastructure and authorize HFC to act on behalf of the City of Houston.

As Houston continues to establish its footprint in the nation as a tourist and convention-friendly destination, I appreciate your consideration to amend Section 351.1015 of the Tax Code by adding the City of Houston as a municipality to which Section 351.1015 applies along with the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth. I look forward to working with you throughout the duration of the 88th Legislative Session.

Sincerely,



Sylvester Turner
Mayor