



CITY OF HOUSTON
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The Honorable Charles Perry
Chair, Senate Committee on Water, Agriculture, & Rural Affairs
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Chairman Perry and Members of the Committee,

The City of Houston (Houston or City) appreciates the opportunity to express our concerns regarding H.B. 2308. We are alarmed about the impact and unintended consequences this bill would create for our populace. While we do recognize the need for food security within the State of Texas, it is important to recognize the limitations this bill will place upon property owner's rights and the prohibition of local government entities to intercede or enforce local regulations in such matters.

The expansion of the definition of "Agricultural Land" to include any other land on which agricultural operations exist or may take place would include activities inside residential areas. The City of Houston receives thousands of nuisance complaints regarding agricultural practices annually. Our current local regulations include but are not limited to distance restrictions for livestock animals and parcel sizing requirements for certain animals to be kept. The regulations in place ensure the wellbeing of animals, while protecting the public health and safety of our communities.

Limitations on actions to restrain an agricultural operation to within one year of the operation's start could allow harmful practices to continue because they have been going on for years. Foul odor, waste runoff and toxic chemical usage are but a few of the issues that would be forced upon homeowners by preempting the rights of local governments to enact measures to protect public health and safety.

In summary, we believe this legislation will result in significant harm to property owners and taxpayers across this state. The existing Texas Right to Farm statute provides sufficient protections to farmers within the State of Texas. The proposed amendments to the statute are unnecessary, punitive in nature and will serve only to place an unnecessary burden on property owners.

Houston appreciates the hard work and efforts of this committee. However, we respectfully request that this bill not move forward. We look forward to continuing to work with you throughout this legislative session.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Paez, Director
City of Houston
Department of Administration & Regulatory Affairs