



CITY OF HOUSTON

Mayor's Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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May 15, 2023

The Honorable Todd Hunter
Chairman, House Committee on State Affairs
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Chairman Hunter and Members of the Committee:

The City of Houston has reviewed and opposes the proposed new added language in Senate Bill 1104 related to the authority of the legislature, governor, and certain political subdivisions with respect to disasters and emergencies.

The Legislation proposes that during a declared state of disaster, only the legislature has the authority to restrict or impair the operation or occupancy of businesses in this state by category or region to appropriately respond to the disaster. The City of Houston believes that local officials including the Mayor are in a better position to make these decisions.

The proposed new language under Section 3. 418.0126 section (b), states in part that "The Governor by proclamation shall convene the legislature in special session to respond to a declared state of disaster..." The City of Houston believes that this will cause an unnecessary delay in the decision-making process in times of disaster. There is also similar language in other sections requiring a "special session," which we do not believe is necessary.

Senate Bill 1104 will take away the City of Houston's ability to exercise local self-governance and its ability to issue disaster declarations that are unique to the City. I respectfully oppose the language in Senate Bill 1104.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "GTB", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

George T. Buenik
Director of Public Safety & Homeland Security
City of Houston