



CITY OF HOUSTON

Planning & Development Department

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

Margaret Wallace Brown
Director
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, Texas 77251-1562

T. 832.393.6600
F. 832.393.6661
www.houstontx.gov

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The Honorable DeWayne Burns
Chairman, House Committee on Land and Resource Management
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

RE: Senate Bill 369 relating to disannexation of certain areas that do not receive full municipal services

Dear Chairman Burns:

On behalf of the City of Houston, I write in opposition to Senate Bill 369 and ask that this written testimony be included in the formal legislative record for SB 369. The City and I thank the Committee and Chairman for the opportunity to comment regarding this proposed legislation.

SB 369 would require that any full purpose city territory not receiving full city services be disannexed if unreasonable procedural measures are not met. This law is unnecessary for the following reasons:

- The City of Houston already approves disannexation requests regularly. If a property owner within our full purpose jurisdiction cannot get the city services needed, the City will disannex the property. We have consistently done this over the past 20 plus years.
- The City of Houston is currently working on water and wastewater projects that would provide full city services to areas that lack them. These areas are currently mostly undeveloped, and we are working with property owners and developers to ensure they get the services needed as the areas are developed.
- Experience has shown us that some city residents do not want to be disannexed from the City of Houston. Even if all city services are not currently available in an area, there are often superior city services being provided that would be immediately lost upon disannexation.

- This bill creates an unnecessary and burdensome process for the submittal of complaints which would require the city to create an online portal on the municipality's website.
- A strict reading of this bill would require the automatic disannexation of areas where full city services are not possible such as 10-foot strips within rights-of-way.
- Sixty days is insufficient time to provide a fully vetted plan of action for the provision of full city services to an area that is undeveloped. Any such plan created on such a short timeline would be very likely to change. Rushing to create a plan of action to avoid a \$500 per day penalty will result in the city having to guess at future contracts and funding simply to meet the unreasonable deadline.
- Forcing the completion of the plan of action within one year or within three years if there is a major infrastructure project involved is unrealistic. Experience has shown us that unforeseen obstacles in funding, weather and changes in personnel hold projects up for much longer.
- Allowing a property owner to force the city to hold an election because the provision of services has not happened quickly enough although the city is working on a resolution in good faith is unfair to the city.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you through the duration of this legislative session.

Sincerely,

Nicole Broussard Smothers

Nicole Broussard Smothers
Deputy Assistant Director
City of Houston, Planning and Development Department
611 Walker St.
Houston, TX 77002
Nicole.Smothers@houstontx.gov
832-393-6580