



April 13, 2021

The Honorable Members
Texas House of Representatives
Natural Resources Committee
Austin, Texas 78768

DAVE MARTIN
Council Member
District E

RE: Letter of Support for HB 2525 Relating to the Creation of Lake Houston Maintenance and Dredging Program

Dear Esteemed Committee Members:

As a resident of District E, Houston City Council Member, and Mayor Pro Tem for the City of Houston, I am in full support of HB 2525. In 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, the Lake Houston area was devastated by severe weather events that were worsened due to the accumulation of sediment and floatable debris within waterways and surrounding tributaries. The lack of proactive measures allowed the buildup of sediment and debris to sit dormant within the banks of these tributaries and waterways for decades.

House Bill (HB) 2525 authored by Representative Dan Huberty gives the State the ability to make up for missed opportunities with the creation of Lake Houston. Lake Houston should never have been created without a plan for regular upkeep and maintenance. HB 2525, the Lake Houston Dredging & Maintenance District (LHDMD) is crucial for the resiliency of the Lake Houston Region and surrounding areas.

HB 2525 will allow the Board of the LHDMD to enter interlocal agreements with entities creating a permanent dredging and floatable debris removal program for Lake Houston and its tributaries. After years of neglect, debris and sediment has accumulated throughout the reservoir and its tributaries greatly reducing Lake Houston's storage capacity, decreasing depths of channels and blocking access to residences which were previously navigable by boat. Many of the smaller channels adjacent to residences are still plagued with nearly 90% of debris almost four years post-Hurricane Harvey.

Progress has been made in recent years through the completion of FEMA, Texas Water Development Board, Harris County and City of Houston projects. Since 2018, the total combined efforts of these entities have resulted in a total of 2,672,491 cubic yards of silt and sediment dredged from Lake Houston and its tributaries at a total cost of \$113,704,763.

However, the larger issue that has remained unaddressed relates to regular, on-going maintenance and dredging of Lake Houston. It is imperative to address this issue so that recent efforts to restore storage capacity are not wasted. Our neighbors have been waiting far too long for legislation like HB 2525 in response to the billions of dollars in damage experienced over the last several years.

Ultimately, I fully support HB 2525 because it is of the utmost importance to preserve the work already completed in addition to protecting the Lake Houston community, preserving the regional economy while ensuring resiliency and bolstering flood mitigation efforts for years to come. Failing to learn from the lessons of our past will doom the region into making the same mistakes that have cost so many their homes, security, and livelihoods. Therefore, I ask you to join in my strong support of HB 2525.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DM", is written over a circular stamp.

Dave Martin
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Houston
Council Member District E