



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

P.O. Box 1562
Houston, Texas 77251-1562

Telephone – Dial 311
www.houstontx.gov

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The Honorable Greg Bonnen
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Chair Bonnen,

Houston has the unfortunate experience of having three 500-year floods in the last 5 years. Our city government has become very familiar with the FEMA process and conditions that come with federal monies. Unfortunately, we are also familiar with the funding delays.

That's why I write today in support of Chairman Murphy's House Bill 2812. This bill comes directly from the experience of local governments who deal with disaster relief funding from the federal government. Chairman Murphy's district was particularly affected by Hurricane Harvey and my office has worked closely with him to speed recovery efforts.

HB 2812 creates a disaster response loan fund to provide short-term loans for disaster relief or recovery projects to political subdivisions located in a declared disaster area. The need for up front financing for Public Assistance (PA) and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs (HMGP) has been a problem for Houston because these programs are reimbursable program - creating a cash flow problem. Houston, which as the largest city in the state, would likely have the most resources of any municipality and yet still facing this financing problem.

HB 2812 directly addresses this short-term financing need that bridges the time until federal reimbursement can finally hit local government accounts.

I urge you to support HB 2812 to help local governments respond to disasters with the state as a solid partner in disaster recovery financing. From experience, this legislation can lift up the lives of our fellow Texas. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sylvester Turner
Mayor