



CITY OF HOUSTON

Fire Department

Promoting Excellence as the World's Largest Accredited Municipal Fire Agency

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May 3, 2021

The Honorable Brooks Landgraf
Chairman of Environmental Regulation Committee
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910

RE: Support for HB 2780

Dear Chairman Landgraf,

The Houston Fire Department is in support of HB 2780 for its stated purpose of promoting the safety of above-ground storage tanks. Our advocacy is grounded in the understanding that adoption of performance standards for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of above-ground storage tanks could increase resilience and minimize the possibility of catastrophic damage in the event of accidents and natural disasters. Emergency incidents affecting above-ground storage tanks pose a greater risk due to the possibility of explosions and dispersion of hazardous materials. This may result in substantial property damage along with injuries and loss of life.

Local fire departments have the responsibility for emergency response to facilities operating above ground storage tanks and count on the appropriate construction standards and fire code enforcement as part of the hazard mitigation planning. Protecting the health and safety of the public, however, is not the sole responsibility of the fire service. HB 2780 would enable the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to play a more active role in helping prevent catastrophic incidents at above-ground storage facilities. The development of above-ground storage tank standards by TCEQ would improve the likelihood of those facilities to withstand floods and hurricanes. Prevention has a proven avenue to safeguard health and safety, and Houston Fire Department supports the provisions of this bill.

Respectfully,


Samuel Peña
Houston Fire Chief