



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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

Telephone – Dial 311
www.houstontx.gov

March 18, 2019

The Honorable John Zerwas
Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
Texas House Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Chairman Zerwas and Members of the Committee on Appropriations:

On behalf of the City of Houston and Mayor Sylvester Turner, please accept this letter as support for Senate Bill 500, which will provide funding for the future Texas Infrastructure Resiliency Fund to assist local municipal governments throughout the State of Texas. These funds will assist in the financing of drainage, flood mitigation and flood control projects.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, the City of Houston faces numerous financial challenges as we recover from the disaster. Several federal programs designed to assist in the recovery effort, specifically, FEMA's Public Assistance (406) and Hazard Mitigation Grant (404) programs require a local match.

Without State assistance, many affected communities may elect to forgo federal funds due to financial constraints. A statewide grant program will enable impacted communities to leverage federal dollars 9 to 1 for the Public Assistance, and 3 to 1 for the Hazard Mitigation Grant programs.

In 2013, the legislature passed, and voters subsequently approved the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT). This program is a statewide program for water and wastewater projects. It is structured to provide affordable, ongoing financial assistance to communities in the development and implementation of water and wastewater projects at cost-effective rates to the consumer. Funding a similar financial program specifically earmarked for floodplain management, flood plan implementation and federal matching is long overdue. The City of Houston applauds this effort and urges legislators to pass this vital measure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to support SB 500 on behalf of over 2.2 million Houstonians still recovering from Harvey. These funds will have a direct impact in protecting lives and property from future storms.

Sincerely,

Stephen Costello, P.E.
Chief Recovery Officer