

PUBLIC COMMENTS

SB 1261

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

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Hearing Date: May 3, 2021 2:00 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

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Richard Howe, Mr.

Self / Retired Engineering Manager

Plano, TX

My comments on SB 1261

I am a native Texan and a lifelong conservative voter. My two sons and my four grandchildren are also native Texans. My grandchildren will be in their 30s and 40s by mid-century. With this bill, the state government is taking full responsibility and accountability for regulating statewide greenhouse gas emissions and their negative externalities. Therefore, I am praying that this bill is a signal that:

(1) Texas elected officials will now be investing quality time to study the best available science to understand the scope of the climate challenge caused by the accumulation of excess greenhouse emissions in our atmosphere and oceans; (A simple 20 minute start is available here – [www.tinyurl.com/littlestbooksurvey](http://www.tinyurl.com/littlestbooksurvey))

(2) State officials will further partner with Texas cities that are doing great work with their Climate Action Plans, to develop a statewide Climate Action Plan; and

(3) perhaps most importantly, the Texas Economic Development officials will champion the great economic opportunities for innovation from Texas businesses in the solutions to the challenges (e.g. clean tech, clean energy, distributed energy, carbon capture technologies, electric vehicles, energy efficiency) of putting our state on a leading path to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Because #LaterIsTooLate.

Rudy Durham, Mayor

City of Lewisville, Texas

Lewisville, TX

I am writing to express our city's opposition to the passage of SB-1261, scheduled for public hearing in the House Environmental Regulation Committee.

This measure would attempt to apply a statewide solution to local and regional issues that might arise in the future. The size and diversity of Texas defies most one-size-fits-all solutions, and this case is no exception.

The DFW Metroplex is in a federal non-compliance area for air quality. Future federal funding for vital transportation and infrastructure projects could be lost if our region does not find a way to come into compliance with EPA standards.

Most of West Texas, on the other hand, does not have this issue and likely never will.

It is not reasonable to deny DFW-area cities the authority to make necessary decisions for the benefit of their communities and the greater North Texas region. There is too much at stake – both financially and environmentally.

It also would not be reasonable to adopt a statewide solution that addresses the needs of North Texas and apply that solution to

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areas of West Texas and other parts of the state where that solution is not needed.

Because of the nature of our expansive state, air quality is much more of a local and regional issue than it is a statewide issue. And local decisions should be made at the local level whenever possible. Locally elected officials are closely connected to their constituents and are accountable to them daily for every decision. Those officials need to be empowered to make thoughtful and proactive decisions for their own communities.

Please join us in opposing the passage of SB-1261 and the preservation of the time-honored, time-tested Texas value of local authority.

Chance Sparks

American Planning Association - Texas Chapter

San Marcos, TX

My name is Chance Sparks, and I represent the American Planning Association - Texas Chapter, and we are testifying in opposition to SB 1261. The Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association (APATX)'s over 2,400 members include public and private sector planners, planning academics and students, elected officials, and citizen planners in communities, large and small, across the great state of Texas.

Our opposition to this bill is based on the belief that Texas is most successful when a partnership between state and local governments allows each level to take advantage of its unique characteristics and act so that together, the State's overall objectives are realized effectively and efficiently.

It has been well documented that impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions are increasing and intensifying and will have significant effects on human life and safety, our communities and their infrastructure, our natural habitats, and our Texas economy. These impacts—from more days with extreme hot temperatures to longer periods of droughts, to decreasing aquifer levels to extreme weather events like Hurricane Harvey—affect the health of our people, the success of our businesses, and the State's bottom line.

While lower emissions benefit us all, the actual act of reduction can only occur by management of emission-producing activities at the local level where the emissions take place. This necessitates that our municipalities and other political subdivisions play a critical role. Imposing such management solely at the State level would mean that some areas are overly restricted while others are not managed appropriately. This is not a one-size-fits-all situation. Rather than the State government taking on all the responsibility for the management of this important health and economic impact, we believe a partnership of State and local governments will be more successful in tailoring appropriate action and minimizing other unintended consequences.

Texans from both the public and private sector have shown creativity in reaching solutions, conserving resources, and saving our citizens money in the process. Limiting local ability to decide how they want to power their communities can even undermine Texas-sized innovation, like the wind energy initiative launched by Governor Perry, which has made Texas the largest producer of wind energy in the nation. This initiative did not occur to address an environmental concern but because the State, entrepreneurs and local communities and property owners worked together to develop a program that was in their mutual best interest.

Chance Sparks AICP

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