

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on State Affairs
For HB 3493

Compiled on: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 2:40 PM

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Hearing Date: April 2, 2025 8:00 AM

Taylor Borer
City of Garland
Garland, TX

Dear Chairman King and Committee Members,

On behalf of the City of Garland, I am writing to express opposition to House Bill 3493, which would eliminate the ability for municipalities to regulate or inspect residential energy back up systems.

As a city who operates a municipally owned electric utility (MOU), this legislation as written would pose significant safety concerns for our electric utility workers, and I truly appreciate the author's willingness to exempt MOU interconnection services from this bill.

While our utility provides inspections from the utility line to the transformer to ensure utility safety, our city provides an inspection from the transformer to the house for residential safety. This inspection ensures that the work is has been properly done and does not pose a fire risk to the resident.

Garland's review process for home backup power systems documents generally takes five to seven business days, and we typically provide next-day inspections upon completion of the construction. We charge a fee for the document review and inspection which generally is \$87.50.

We intend to be good actors in providing safety inspections of these systems. We do not intend to delay or overregulate our constituents, but our responsibility for the safety of our neighborhoods and our first responders is not something we can ignore. Under HB 3493, not only will the city not know if a system is safely installed, it may not even know that a system exists on a residence at all. We believe we owe it to the entire neighborhood to ensure safe installation, as well as to our firefighters who would risk their lives fighting a residential fire.

The City of Garland asks the committee to reject HB 3493 in its current form. The need for some type of inspection is vital to the safety of our residents and first responders, and we look forward to working with the committee to help find a solution. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at (214) 794-8904 or via email at slemay@garlandtx.gov.

Sincerely,

Scott LeMay
Mayor

Shannon Noble
Texas Air Conditioning Contractors Association
Austin, TX

The Texas Air Conditioning Contractors Association respectfully opposes HB 3493. HVAC contractors' installations must be permitted and performed by licensed contractors, and installation of generators or solar power systems should also have to be permitted and performed by licensed plumbers and electricians. Requiring this work to be unregulated will lead to installations by unlicensed workers that will potentially put consumers and their neighbors at risk.

Robert Pennington
City of Piney Point Village - City Administrator
Houston, TX

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Ken King
Chairman, House Committee on State Affairs
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Chairman King:

As the Mayor of The City of Piney Point Village, a general law municipality of approximately 3,500 residents in the heart of Harris County, I am writing regarding to express our opposition to H.B. 3493 by Representative Schwertner. As filed, H.B. 3493 would prohibit a municipality from regulating or inspecting a “residential energy backup system”.

After weathering both the May 2024 derecho storm and Hurricane Beryl, where many of our residents were without electrical power for over a week after each storm, the City of Piney Point Village is very interested in promoting the responsible and efficient installation of home backup systems. But not at the expense of the health and safety of our residents.

While an energy storage system (“ESS”) can help meet energy demands placed on aging grids and can supply backup power during storms, these products are not without associated risks. In residential areas, citizens rely on their municipal government to account for, provide protections against, and manage these types of risks –often through the permitting and inspection process. It seems foolhardy to exempt all ESS, a still emerging technology, from this vital government process.

According to the National Fire Protection Association’s 2024 publication: Energy Storage Systems Safety Fact Sheet, “the rise in the number of ESS installations requires the need for a heightened understanding of the hazards involved and more extensive measures to reduce the risks”. The NFPA goes on to detail some of the hazards of ESS, including Thermal Runaway (when a battery creates more heat than it can dissipate, resulting in battery fire or explosion); Stranded Energy (a shock hazard present after a fire); Toxic Releases (leading to the creation of an explosive atmosphere inside the ESS room or container); and Deep Seated Fires (where the protective housing of the ESS requires large amounts of water to dissipate the fire).

(Reference: <https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/electrical/energy-storage-systems>)

NFPA recommends proper venting and fire suppression systems, along with specific permitting requirements. These are the types of risks that municipalities manage through their regulatory and inspection process.

The NFPA also recommends specific fire department training and emergency operations planning, as ESS have both risks of fire and electric shock. Again, municipalities want to prioritize the safety of not just their residents, but their fire fighting and emergency services personnel. Fire departments should be aware, at a minimum, of where ESS are being used in our community, so that if they should need to respond to an emergency involving an ESS, they are fully prepared to handle the situation.

Finally, as the NFPA warns of deep-seated fires from ESS that take large amounts of

Andrea Sunseri, Mrs.

Self

Galveston, TX

I am a life-long resident of Galveston Island. The citizens have worked long and hard in this community to have a good relationship with our neighbors, whether they are full-time residents or if they have come for a few days to enjoy our Island. I very strongly oppose HB 2767 because it will absolutely destroy the platforms and accountability to work under the guidelines the Galveston community has in place to ensure proper HOT payments that operators must abide by. Every community is different in Texas and each City should have the ability to set their own restriction and operating guidelines, just as the citizens have done in our Galveston community that have worked so well. Each community knows what works best for their citizens.

Kathy Turner

SELF

McGregor, TX

strongly support

Hearing Date: April 2, 2025 8:00 AM

Michael Belsick
Fredericksburg Tea Party
Fredericksburg, TX
I am FOR HB 3493