

## How Can Small Cities Work with the Legislature?

What happens at the Texas Capitol every two years sometimes seems like a big-city process. The legislature meets in a good-sized city, after all—Austin. And many of the lobbyists and their firms are based in the big cities. So it might be natural to presume that small cities have little chance of getting noticed during a legislative session. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

TML routinely calls on mayors, councilmembers, and city managers from small cities to testify, make phone calls, or just get out the word about all the issues Texas cities face, regardless of their complexity. With all due respect to the larger cities, often nothing shouts credibility more than a small city mayor engaged on an important issue. Small cities get heard—there's no doubt about it.

This means that we could use your help. If you have special expertise in any area the legislature might be considering, your assistance is needed. The TML staff is gathering e-mail addresses from city officials (elected and appointed from small and large cities) who are willing to provide testimony during the 2009 legislative session, want to be kept “in the loop” on certain subject matters, or are willing to simply provide their perspective on a particular legislative matter. If you would like to participate in this “E-List” project, simply send an e-mail to Chelsea Phillips at [chelsea@tml.org](mailto:chelsea@tml.org) with your name, e-mail address, and the subject matter(s) below that interest you.

- Annexation
- Billboards
- Civil Service
- Code Enforcement
- Collective Bargaining and Meet and Confer
- Development Permits
- Disaster Response
- Disease Presumption
- Economic Development
- Elections
- Electric Utilities
- Emergency Services Districts/EMS
- Ethics
- Gas Utilities
- Land Use
- Municipal Court
- Open Meetings/Open Records



- Personnel
- Property Tax
- Public Safety—Fire
- Public Safety—Police
- Purchasing
- Sales Tax
- Telecommunications
- Transportation
- Water
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

A friendly word of warning to the smallest cities about this project: If you're an official from a small city who shows an interest in permit vesting, economic development, or another similar issue, you may well be the first to be called on! We mean what we say—small cities matter to TML and to the legislature, and we want you to be a partner in our efforts.

The best thing a small city can do in the meantime is get to know the state legislators. Give them a call, invite them to city hall, and share your town's concerns and successes. Ask how you might assist them. Many of our legislators started out as mayors, councilmembers, commissioners, or school board members. They love to “talk shop” anytime.

For a complete list of contact information regarding your legislator(s), go to the TML Web site at [www.tml.org/links\\_texas.html](http://www.tml.org/links_texas.html). ★