



TEXAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE
Empowering Texas cities to serve their citizens

President **David Rutledge**, Mayor, Bridge City
Executive Director **Bennett Sandlin**

April 5, 2023

The Honorable DeWayne Burns
Chairman, House Land and Resource Management Committee
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768-2910

Dear Chairman Burns:

I am writing on behalf of the Texas Municipal League in opposition to **H.B. 1204** by **Representative Martinez**. H.B. 1204 would allow an emergency services district (ESD) to prohibit a city from removing territory from an ESD, as permitted under current law, when the city would be the sole provider of emergency services in the area.

The existing statute governing removal of territory from an ESD by a city is well-established, and has been modified over the years to address issues that arise between cities and ESDs, including legislation in 2019 ensuring adequate compensation is provided to an ESD when territory is removed because the city will be the sole provider of emergency services. Additionally, 2003 legislation established a system of arbitration to handle financial disputes between cities and ESDs relating to the removal of territory from an ESD.

H.B. 1204 would authorize an unelected ESD board of directors to unilaterally prevent a city from seeking to provide emergency services in an area. This means that an ESD board can single handedly prevent a city from providing fire and emergency medical services to existing city residents, or to property owners who are requesting a city to annex them. In either case it makes sense that a city should be able to provide emergency services to the territory in question. We view H.B. 1204 as a significant step backwards for the regional provision of emergency services. The League supports a process that authorizes the city to provide emergency services to city residents, as is required under current law.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Monty Wynn
Director, Grassroots and Legislative Services
Texas Municipal League