

Chair
Betty Reinbeck

Commissioners
William D. Darby
Virginia Hermosa
Brant C. Ince
Mike Novak
Jack W. Perry
Alvin Shaw



Executive Director
Harvey Hilderbran

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May 28, 2015

The Honorable Mayor and Members of the Austin City Council

VIA EMAIL

RE: Resolution directing the City Manager to file a challenge petition with the Appraisal Review Board relating to the level of appraisals of commercial property values by the Travis Central Appraisal District pursuant to Chapter 41 of the Texas Tax Code

Dear Mayor and Members of the Austin City Council:

It has come to my attention that you will consider the above-referenced resolution at today's special called meeting of the City Council ("the Council"). Under Chapter 2167 of the Texas Government Code, the Texas Facilities Commission ("TFC") leases space for a large number of state agencies, including space located in Austin and Travis County. In this statutory capacity, TFC is concerned about the potential consequences for state government if this proposed challenge petition is filed.

In reviewing the report entitled "An Analysis of TCAD's Commercial Valuations for [the] City of Austin" dated May 11, 2015 ("the Report"), TFC is very concerned that there is no underlying data presented to support or justify the conclusions contained in the Report. It is also my understanding that the Travis Central Appraisal District ("TCAD") has made a response to the Report and that TCAD's response raises many serious questions and objections concerning the analysis and conclusions contained in the Report. Furthermore, as you probably know, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts ("the CPA") is required by statute to conduct a study of this subject every two years, using consistent methodology statewide to assess the accuracy of valuations by each central appraisal district. It is my understanding that the results of the study by the CPA for the same time period (2012-2014) differed significantly from the conclusions contained in the Report which the Council is using as the very basis for the proposed challenge petition.

In order to avoid any unintended, and potentially serious, consequences to the State of Texas or to other taxing jurisdictions, I strongly urge you to make the underlying data used in the Report available for public review and to otherwise ensure that all concerns raised in TCAD's response to the Report, as well as the vast inconsistencies between the Report's conclusions and the results of the CPA's study, are formally addressed before the Council takes any action on the proposed challenge petition.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Harvey Hilderbran".

Harvey Hilderbran
Executive Director

cc: Chair and Commissioners, Texas Facilities Commission

Texas Facilities Commission

Physical address: 1711 San Jacinto Blvd, Austin, Texas 78701