

Allowing county assistance districts to perform certain duties

HB 1120 by Miller (Miles)

Digest

HB 1120 would have allowed a county assistance district in Fort Bend County to perform inside or outside the district an authorized function that benefited the district.

Governor's reason for veto

“Special districts exist to perform functions within their districts, but House Bill 1120 would extend this power outside the boundaries without adequate safeguards to protect against the potential for abuse.”

Response

Rep. Rick Miller, the bill's author, said, “HB 1120 would have allowed for a county assistance district in Fort Bend County to perform certain functions both inside and immediately outside its boundaries to improve the district's ability to benefit the community and operate in a cost-efficient manner.

“HB 1120 would have allowed for a county assistance district to perform five key functions inside and immediately outside its boundaries, including:

- the construction, maintenance, or improvement of roads or highways;
- the provision of law enforcement and detention services;
- the maintenance or improvement of libraries, museums, parks, or other recreational facilities;
- the provision of services that benefit the public health or welfare, including the provision of firefighting and fire prevention services; and
- the promotion of economic development and tourism.

“I would have been more than happy to work with the governor's office to ensure that this legislation created adequate safeguards to protect against potential abuse. However, the first time I was aware of any concerns from the governor's office was when I received notification of the veto for HB 1120. This veto is an unfortunate loss for my constituents who would have greatly benefited from this legislation.”

Sen. Borris Miles, the Senate sponsor, said, “HB 1120 would have provided Fort Bend County flexibility in administering its county assistance districts. County assistance districts allow counties to raise revenue from targeted areas then expend the revenue on certain public services. HB 1120 would have clarified that while county assistance districts collect revenues from targeted areas, they could spend revenues to the benefit of the county, throughout the county.

“Certain Texas counties, particularly Fort Bend County, have lost sales tax revenue base as some municipalities strip annex certain roads and commercial properties to collect sales tax but then fail to provide services to these areas. HB 1120 would have provided Fort Bend County relief by clearly allowing its county assistance districts to expend revenues to benefit the entire county, whether inside or outside the district's tax base. This veto denies Fort Bend County the ability to help everyone in the county from the revenues generated by these districts. The governor's office never indicated any concerns with the bill during the session and their now-stated concern about the potential for abuse exists with any special district and could have been addressed if the author's office or our office had been informed of their concerns.”

Notes

HB 1120 passed on the Local, Consent, and Resolutions Calendar and was not analyzed in a *Daily Floor Report*.