

State of Texas
Texas Senate

P.O. Box 12068
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2068
(512) 463-0107
FAX (512) 463-8810



11451 KATY FREEWAY, SUITE 209
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77079
(713) 464-0282
FAX (713) 461-0108

Paul Bettencourt
DISTRICT 7

Paul.Bettencourt@senate.texas.gov

For Immediate Release
April 16, 2019

Contact Information
Robert Flanagan | (713) 464-0282
Robert.Flanagan@senate.texas.gov

Senate Unanimously Passes Automatic Disaster Reappraisal Legislation In Wake of Harvey
SB 1772, by Bettencourt, will ensure that taxpayers get immediate property tax break after a major disaster

Austin, Texas - The Texas Senate has unanimously passed Senate Bill 1772, authored by Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) to trigger an automatic disaster reappraisal of impacted properties following a major disaster, such as Hurricane Harvey. In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey many taxpayers were confronted with the cruel reality that they would be taxed at full value on their property that was in many cases completely destroyed. While some taxing jurisdictions did opt to trigger disaster reappraisal many major ones, such as Harris County, the City of Houston, and Houston ISD did not. In some cases homeowners on one side of the Buffalo Bayou in Houston got reappraised by Spring Branch ISD while homeowners a stone's throw away did not.

"Nothing makes home and business owners madder than paying full property taxes on a damaged or destroyed property," said Senator Bettencourt. **"In the case of Hurricane Harvey for example the government should be focused on giving taxpayers a break and getting them back on their feet...not worried about their own bottom line!"**

SJR 57, the Resolution accompanying SB 1772, would allow for a property tax exemption for property located in a governor-declared disaster area and that is at least 15% damaged by the disaster as determined by the chief appraiser. Section 23.02 of the Texas Tax Code currently allows for a taxing unit located party or entirely in a declared disaster area to authorize reappraisal of damaged property following the disaster if they choose to do so. Under Section 23.02, if multiple taxing units ask for disaster reappraisal in the same area they will share those costs. Taxpayers have 105 days to apply and can be granted 4 levels of relief up to 100% total loss.

"With some taxing entities collecting millions of dollars more in revenue each year it makes sense that when disaster strikes impacted taxpayers will get relief," continued Senator Bettencourt. **"We have a moral obligation to help Texans in the rebuilding process following a major disaster."**

Multiple taxing entities did trigger disaster reappraisal for home and business owners following Hurricane Harvey. Fort Bend County, Montgomery County, Spring Branch ISD, Katy ISD, Willis ISD, the City of Shoreacres, and many other smaller taxing entities did act to provide impacted taxpayers with needed relief, along with over two dozen other taxing units.

"It is time to put taxpayers first and make disaster reappraisal automatic!" concluded Senator Bettencourt.

###