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LOIS W. KOLKHORST

STATE SENATOR  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Senator Lois Kolkhorst Comments on Need for Eminent Domain Reform  
To Remain a Top Legislative Priority**

“After hundreds of hours of negotiations with landowner and industry groups, the State Senate passed SB 421, major eminent domain reform for the third consecutive session on April 4 with an overwhelming and bipartisan vote of 28-3.

SB 421 would have provided meaningful eminent domain reform for rural and suburban Texas. Specifically, the legislation provided several major changes benefiting landowners, which included: preventing low initial offers, improving easement terms, and requiring meetings to ensure property owners understand the process and can have their questions answered.

Unfortunately, SB 421 was referred to the House Committee on Land & Resource Management where its Chairman, State Representative Tom Craddick (R-Midland), seized the legislation from its original House sponsor State Representative DeWayne Burns (R-Cleburne). Craddick then severely weakened SB 421 to the benefit of condemning authorities. The language of the House version would have turned back the clock for landowners and greatly harmed them.

The House passed SB 421 on Wednesday, May 22, the last day to pass a bill, leaving very little time to work out our differences. I cannot agree to the Craddick proposal which would do the opposite of what we set to do: help level the playing field for landowners in the taking of their property. In fact, a bipartisan majority of House members passed a motion to clearly instruct the Craddick-led conference committee to work off of the Senate language for our negotiations, but that motion was ignored.

While I have respect for Chairman Craddick and have worked with him for many years, my interests lie in contrast to his. My interests lie with the fair treatment of property owners across the state. Texans believe in the right to 'life, liberty and property' which is granted to us in the United States Bill of Rights, and that's why we must demand serious protections for landowners against takings of private property by private entities.

There is a balance that must be struck that allows industry to flourish while respecting the basic rights of property owners. This issue will and must remain a top state legislative priority.”