

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
To: [Senate Redistricting](#)
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input
Date: Friday, October 15, 2021 10:30:48 AM

Date: 2021-10-15
First Name: Guadalupe
Last Name: Cuellar
Title: Legislative Attorney
Organization: City of El Paso
Address: [REDACTED]
City: El Paso
State: TX
Zipcode: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: House

Message:

The City opposes HB 1 because it dilutes the City's urban minority representation by redrawing district lines so that the County of El Paso loses one District Representative and pairs two districts that are currently represented by Hispanic women. The pretext that the census population data require such a shift of district boundaries and a reduction in representation fails to acknowledge that there are other legal alternative options. PLANH2192 or PLANH2207 would redraw the boundary lines in a manner that would not dilute the voice of the large Hispanic urban voters residing in El Paso. We urge the Committee to oppose HB 1 unless amendments, similar to PLANH2192 or PLANH2207, are adopted as part of the bill.

Based on the ideal population figure for Texas (194,303), El Paso County needs an increase in population of 105,958 in order to keep its existing five districts. However, legally the ideal population number can deviate 5% lower or 5% higher. Amendments were filed and discussed on the House floor that would have allowed El Paso to keep its five districts by extending District 75 out to the east, which would have allowed El Paso to meet the population requirements for keeping five districts within a 5% lower deviation. It should be noted that as currently proposed, in all of the districts that would be located in El Paso County, HB 1 provides for standard deviations within 5% of the higher deviation allowed. So approving lower standard deviations as proposed by PLANH2192 or PLANH2207 would not be unusual.

Despite the fact that the above amendments would have addressed the population deficiency without diluting El Paso's urban minority representation, those amendments failed. Instead, the untenable solution of breaching the El Paso County line to have El Paso represented by a Representative, located more than 500 miles away, that represents mostly rural voters, spanning a distance of over 500 miles, was approved. The City of El Paso is an urban city with a population of over 678,000. There are no similarly populated cities in District 74 as currently proposed in HB 1. Not even close. Additionally, the City's growth is primarily to the east, and the public infrastructure requirements with such expansion can be made more complicated when there are colonias located outside of the City limits that lack the much needed public infrastructure improvements. In the past years, both the County and the City have worked tirelessly with the District 75 to improve those conditions. Those efforts could be hindered when the representation changes to someone unfamiliar with the intricate history of the area and with no developed relationship or interaction with the impacted community.

The City urges the Committee to amend HB 1 to incorporate plans similar to PLANH2192 or

PLANH2207. Those plans will extend District 75 out to the east, instead of extending another district into El Paso County. This would ensure that the El Paso County line would not be breached and the representation of the large urban minority population and community of interests within El Paso are not diluted.

