



SIERRA CLUB

LONE STAR CHAPTER

April 18, 2023

To: The Honorable DeWayne Burns, Chair

Members, House Committee on Land and Resource Management

**From: Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club,
cyrus.reed@sierraclub.org, 512-888-9411**

The Sierra Club supports HB 2408 by Reynolds relating to building codes applicable in the unincorporated area of a county; authorizing a fee.

County Residents Need Better Buildings!

No state is growing more rapidly than Texas, and while city populations are increasing, so too are the areas in the unincorporated areas of counties, including suburban areas. As both home, commercial and multi-family construction increases to meet the growing populations, many of the buildings built outside the city are not being built to the same standards as inside the city. Given that buildings last for decades, assuring good quality construction that saves water, saves energy and is built to withstand our changing climate is an important policy issue.

HB 2408 would help solve this issue by adopting the 2021 codes for unincorporated areas of the state. Importantly for areas of the state which

face hurricanes and flooding like Fort Bend County and Harris County, these modern codes are designed to better protect residential and commercial buildings from extreme weather events.

HB 2408 would create a state minimum standard based on the 2021 International Residential Code and the 2021 International Building (Commercial) Code in the unincorporated areas of the state. The bill would become effective on January 1, 2024 to give counties to adopt the new codes. The bill would allow counties not only to adopt these codes, but also allow them to impose permit fees, hire inspectors (or use third parties) and have enhanced enforcement powers. While these additional powers would be optional for counties that wanted to use them, the bill would require counties that want to adopt and enforce the new codes to provide public notice and allow input before adoption. It would require a public hearing if at least five persons requested such a hearing.

We believe that counties should be afforded these additional powers to make sure citizens in all areas of the state are afforded modern and safe buildings that save energy, reduce water use and are resilient to climate extremes.