



SIERRA CLUB

LONE STAR CHAPTER

The Honorable Chairman Brian Birdwell
Members, Committee on Natural Resources
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The Sierra Club opposes SB 1860 (Hughes) Relating to the adoption of a climate policy in a municipal charter.

Many cities across Texas have recently taken action to make their cities more resilient to climate extremes, while others have attempted to set and achieve goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Thus, the City of Houston has adopted Climate Action and Resiliency Plans, while cities like Austin have adopted a Climate Equity Plan, and the City of Dallas recently adopted its own plan known as "CECAP."

In other cases, where cities have not taken action, local citizens have democratically sought to place a charter amendment on their ballot to take a democratic vote on whether to adopt a climate action charter amendment. Such is the case of El Paso. While the local Sierra Club group in El Paso has not endorsed this particular charter amendment, we do support the efforts of other citizens and organizations to democratically exercise their rights to advocate for a charter amendment. It remains to be seen whether voters will actually approve such a measure.

Nanny State?

Instead, SB 1860 would put the state in the position of having to approve any charter amendment involving climate policy. In essence a city that was

planning to put a charter or charter amendment on the ballot would need to seek permission from the state - presumably the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality thought it is not stated clearly - before proceeding. It is worth noting that the State of Texas does not have an official climate plan or charter, and TCEQ, while having the authority to regulate greenhouse gasses, only does very minimal oversight over greenhouse gas emission permitting.

The heart of the bill states: "[Sec. 9.0045. APPROVAL OF CLIMATE CHARTER OR AMENDMENT TO CHARTER REQUIRED. Before a vote may be held under Section 9.003 or 9.004, the municipality or charter commission must receive approval on a climate charter from the appropriate state agency with proper jurisdiction to propose a climate charter for a municipality or an amendment to a municipality's climate charter.](#)"

The Sierra Club does not see any need for this bill. The City of El Paso and its voters can decide whether or not the proposed charter amendment moves forward -or not - and putting the state in the business of approving charter amendments is not an appropriate state function.