



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

ACTION ALERT: Help Protect Your Community's Local Tree Ordinances

Use the following to speak as an individual:

Governor Abbot has targeted **local tree ordinances in the upcoming Special Session** of the Texas Legislature. [Click here](#) for the Press Release explaining the anti local tree ordinance bills Sen. Bob Hall and Rep. Paul Workman intend to introduce. **We need to generate lots of communication to legislators from their constituents to counteract the messages they will receive from the Governor and Lt. Governor.**

What you can do:

- 1. Write to your State Senator and State Representative to leave local tree protections alone! (See the sample starting sentences on page 2, if one of them apply.)**
2. If your city has local tree ordinances, write, call, or email your City Council member and Mayor. Ask them to contact their representative and senator with the following message: “(name of city) City Council opposes attempts to reduce cities’ authority to write ordinances regarding trees.” Use the Talking Points below.
3. [Click here](#) to find cities with tree ordinances in Texas.
4. Help spread the word:
 - Use the Talking Points below to inform friends, neighbors, and other organizations. (Email it, or print it and take to meetings.)
 - Write a Letter to the Editor.
 - **Contact any developers, realtors, or business people who understand the importance of tree ordinances in your community, and ask them to write to their legislators.**
 - **See page 2 for a list of “swing” and “key” legislators. If you know constituents in those districts, enlist their help in communicating.**
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Use the following Talking Points to defend the trees in your community.

- **Cities need tree ordinances! Indiscriminate tree removal costs taxpayers money!** When trees are removed without permits, taxpayers are stuck with increased storm water runoff, air pollution, and water contamination. Improvements to handle increased storm water runoffs costs taxpayer dollars. Trees can reduce air conditioning costs by 30% for individual homes, businesses and public offices. In urban areas, trees can reduce energy bills by millions of dollars across a city.
- **Citizens who live in cities help shape a shared vision for their community.** Cities might be large or small, liberal or conservative; but citizens in all cities have the right to determine their own future. Citizens serve on boards to develop tree ordinances and citizens hold their locally elected officials accountable for development of the community according to their shared values.
- **Local land use and tree ordinance disputes are best negotiated at the local level.** Every community has unique local resources, development patterns, and economic bases. Stakeholders at the local level are best able to find common ground for the mutual benefit of the community.

Here are some sample starting sentences.

- As your constituent living in the City of xxxxxx, I can attest that our tree ordinance has benefitted our city in many ways. (Give local examples of stormwater control, air pollution, etc. if you know them. If you have facts or data from newspaper articles, good to share.)



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- As a citizen of City of xxxxxx, I have served on the xxxxxx Board/Commission (example: Planning Commission). My own experiences with working with other stakeholders to make recommendations to City

Council is that we have an open process. All interests are considered, including neighborhood groups, business people, developers, and environmental groups. These kinds of decisions are best worked out at the local level. (Give specific examples of working out conflicts, if appropriate.)

- As a business owner in the City of xxxxxx, I support the need of our city to have a tree ordinance. Protecting local trees is good business because....

Possible “swing” legislators who need to hear from constituents.

Most of the conservative legislators from rural areas and small cities would be open to arguments regarding local control of tree ordinances, especially with specific examples from your city.

- SD18- Sen. Lois Kolkhorst. She authored an anti-tree ordinance bill in the Regular Session, but she worked with cities to come up with a compromise bill that was eventually vetoed by the Governor. If you are a constituent, thank her for finding ways to work with cities, and ask for her help with protecting cities’ rights to make tree ordinances.

“Key” legislators who are anti-tree ordinances, but need to hear from constituents, especially from small cities.

- SD2- Sen. Bob Hall (will author the bill)
- HD47- Rep. Paul Workman (will author the bill)
- SD 25- Sen. Donna Campbell (is influential, authored anti-tree ordinance bill in Reg. Session)
- SD 10- Sen. Konni Burton (is influential, authored anti-tree ordinance bill in Reg. Session)

House Urban Affairs Committee (most likely place for bill to be referred)-They especially need to hear from constituents. (Cities in district with tree ordinances)

- HD145- Rep. Carol Alvarado (Houston)
- HD67- Rep. Jeff Leach (Plano, Allen)
- HD123- Rep. Diego Bernal (San Antonio)
- HD135- Rep. Gary Elkins (Parts of Houston, Jersey Village)
- HD139- Rep. Jarvis Johnson (Houston)
- HD45- Rep. Jason Isaac (San Marcos, Woodcreek, Dripping Springs, Kyle, Buda, Niederwald)
- HD96- Rep. Bill Zedler (Fort Worth, Arlington, Kennedale, Mansfield)

Thank you for your help in defending local control of trees!

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Contact Jensie, for more information or to connect with other supporters in your city.