



May 5, 2015

Senator Jane Nelson
State Capitol
Room: 1E.5
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Senator Nelson,

We the members of the North Texas Commission, comprising of business leaders, municipalities, and higher education institutions, are writing to lend our voice to three pressing issues facing our region and Texas as a whole. As the fastest growing large region in the U.S., these issues are particularly important to North Texans to retain our business strength, to ensure that our universities remain vibrant in research and development, and to provide an added transportation option between two Texas economies. We ask you, as a leader on these issues, to please take into consideration the following:

We are glad to see the fiscal responsibility of the Texas Legislature by cutting taxes. We **strongly favor the across the board franchise tax cuts, and sales tax reduction as presented in HB 31 and HB 32.** Equitable for all Texas taxpayers, the franchise tax cut represents broad base tax relief that will help all businesses and continue the pro-business climate in the state. Both businesses and individuals will reap the benefits of this tax break, improving everyone's purchasing power, thus further stimulating our economy. These proposals are smart ways to create a fair tax relief that will be felt by everyone.

Secondly, we **support funding the Texas Research Incentive Program at the level as proposed in the House budget.** Successful research and development universities are critical to creating an environment of innovation that leads to long-term economic prosperity. The citizens of North Texas have strongly supported our universities, and as such North Texas universities are owed a backlog of \$56 million of TRIP funds. We **support funding TRIP at the House level of \$138 million** to ensure that our universities can continue to grow in both size and standing.

Finally, we would like to encourage you to **support the Texas Central Railway project and eliminate any obstacles in the budget that would limit high speed rail's operations, including prohibiting TXDOT from working on the project in any way.** This project is a vital infrastructure addition to Texas and would make Texas a leader in the future of transportation. In North Texas alone we add one person every five minutes, and Houston continues to be a powerhouse economy. With this tremendous growth, we must address the major transportation needs both current and future. The high-speed rail would reduce congestion by taking drivers off the state-funded highways and give them a private business solution for the important business corridor that is North Texas to Houston. The railway will help create jobs in its construction, maintenance and operation. This project is not only an infrastructure improvement, but also an investment in Texas business. We hope that you too can support this project by coming out **against HB 1889 and SB 1601.**

Thank you for your consideration. As a representative of the North Texas region, we appreciate your service and dedication.

Sincerely,

Mabrie Jackson
President and CEO
North Texas Commission