

## 2019 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### FLOOD DISASTER RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

In August 2018, the citizens of Harris County overwhelmingly approved a \$2.5 billion bond to fund Harris County Flood Control District projects to repair and strengthen our county's resiliency against the threat of future flooding. The \$2.5 billion will not be enough even when we consider that some of these funds will be utilized as matching funds to leverage federal dollars on our behalf. The State of Texas has a \$10 plus billion Rainy Day Fund and while the state of Texas must insure that we maintain a financial cushion with this fund, critical planning, project implementation and flood prevention must be initiated by the State of Texas.

#### ANHOC advocates for:

1) Recovery: Providing \$1 billion in state funding for local match to critical recovery projects identified by the Texas Division of Emergency management to cover unanticipated local match requirements for local communities to maximize federal funding for post-disaster recovery. These recovery projects will attract federal funding exceeding \$6 billion.

2) Mitigation: Providing a one-time \$2.15 billion appropriation from the Economic Stabilization Fund to create a Texas-wide flood infrastructure fund for future flood mitigation projects administered by the Texas Water Development board, which will provide grants and loans to the most effective and shovel-ready projects across the state, e.g. those that draw down additional federal funding, that help vulnerable populations and that contribute positively to the state's water supply.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Each legislative session, Chambers and Economic Development Corporations are in a defensive position to protect the few economic development tools we have at our disposal in the state of Texas.

ANHOC supports the continuance of the use of tax abatements, tax increment financing, reinvestment zones and other incentives to promote development and job creation. Specifically, the legislature should reauthorize Chapter 312 agreements and continue to maintain Texas' commitment to Chapters 313, 380 and 381 agreements.

Additionally, ANHOC supports continued funding for the Skills Development Fund Program administered by the Texas Workforce Commission in support of workforce training in partnership with local community colleges.

### TRANSPORTATION

**Improved Transportation Systems.** The Alliance of North Houston Chambers of Commerce (ANHOC) supports improved highways, ports of entry, waterways and other infrastructure that facilitates trade, increases the effective flow of goods and services, promotes tourism and increases public safety wherever these improvements can improve economic opportunity and state productivity.

**Toll Roads.** We support the authorization and construction of toll roads. New capacity toll roads will provide motorists with choices in safe, reliable travel. User fees will support development, operations, financing and long-term maintenance of facilities that otherwise may not be feasible with traditional state and local resources. Any new toll roads must have local support. ANHOC supports public-private partnerships that bring innovative methods to design, build, finance, maintain or operate an enhanced transportation system in order to meet the growing needs of Texas, while protecting taxpayer interests and property rights. Such partnerships should ensure that they do not preclude public ownership or operation of toll roads where they are supported locally and can be shown to be economically viable.

**Toll Road Operation and Administration.** ANHOC supports:

- Maximizing the seamless and transparent assessment and collection of appropriate tolls across multiple toll authorities;
- Encouraging the payment of appropriate toll charges without excessive penalties, and effective and efficient resolution of toll payment disputes; and
- Encouraging uniform policies for safe and effective toll road operation, including those related to accident response, vehicle disablement or other appropriate vehicle operator requirements.

**Financing Options.** All financing options should be explored. Motor fuel tax limitations, except for constitutionally-required allocation of motor fuel taxes to the educational system:

- Strict limitations on the use of motor fuel taxes for other than transportation programs, and
- Elimination of diversions of transportation funds to other uses.

## About ANHOC

ANHOC represents more than 67,000 businesses in North and Northwest Harris and South Montgomery Counties. Created in 1994 to foster regional support and cooperation by area Chambers, ANHOC has effectively facilitated regional economic development and joint discussions on public policy issues of concern to the region's businesses. Per the bylaws, ANHOC relies on the governing bodies of each chamber to propose, review and approve legislative positions and regional policy statements. For a position or policy statement to be adopted as an official ANHOC position, it must be approved by the Board of Directors of all of the ANHOC member Chambers.