



May 7, 2026

The Honorable John Whitmire  
Mayor of Houston  
901 Bagby St  
Houston, TX 77002

Re: Affordability Protections and Discounted Rates for the Proposed Solid Waste Administration Fee

Dear Mayor Whitmire,

I appreciate the Administration thinking creatively about generating the critical revenue our city needs. As you know, your proposal establishes a phased solid waste administration fee that will reach \$300 annually for Houston households by Fiscal Year 2032.

To ensure all Houstonians can afford this fee, I urge you to commit now to developing a complementary discounted or reduced rate structure for seniors, low-income residents, and qualified disabled veterans tied to future fee increases so affordability protections are built in from the start, rather than addressed years later after costs become unaffordable for working families. The latest Census data indicates that more than 21 percent of the city – more than 500,000 Houstonians – live below the poverty line, underscoring why any commitment to affordability cannot be an afterthought.

Houston already recognizes the importance of affordability protections in other essential services. Both the City's W.A.T.E.R. Fund and METRO Houston provide assistance or reduced rates to seniors, residents with disabilities, qualified veterans, and low-income families. Other major Texas cities have also adopted utility assistance programs, including Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin.

I also believe that any new fee must be dedicated toward improving the solid waste services Houstonians rely on every day, including combating illegal dumping, supporting solid waste workers, and delivering more reliable trash pickup. Houstonians deserve to have a real say in what they can afford and what service improvements this fee promises to deliver in return.

I look forward to working with you, City Council, and the community to ensure any final proposal is both fiscally responsible and equitable for Houstonians.

Sincerely,

Alejandra Salinas  
Houston City Council Member, At-Large 4