



AGENDA MEMORANDUM
City Council Meeting of October 15, 2013

DATE: October 1, 2013
TO: Ronald L. Olson, City Manager
FROM: Tom Tagliabue, Director, Intergovernmental Relations Department
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361/826-3850

Resolution adopting federal legislative policy priorities for 113th United States Congress.

STAFF PRESENTER(S):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title/Position</u>	<u>Department</u>
1. Tom Tagliabue	Director	Intergovernmental Relations

OUTSIDE PRESENTER(S):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title/Position</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1. Larry Meyers	President	Meyers and Associates

BACKGROUND :

The City is being asked to develop a list of general guidelines and specific legislative proposals to advocate for and against during the 113th U.S. Congress, which convened on January 3, 2013, and will adjourn on January 3, 2015, following the completion of two annual sessions.

It is standard practice for the City to provide recommendations of legislative policy issues to support and oppose. Typically these policy items are brought to the Council earlier part of an odd-numbered year shortly after a new Congress has convened. A number of factors contributed to the delay in bringing federal priorities to the Council earlier. First, there was a transition period for the new Intergovernmental Relations Director. Second, the City was actively engaged in developing the state legislative priorities. Finally, the partisan divide in Washington, D.C., meant Congressional attention and action was unlikely in the first session (2013) of the 113th Congress.

Demographic Information about the 113th US Congress

As of July 2013, in the House of Representatives, there are 234 Republicans, 206

Democrats (including five Delegates and the Resident Commissioner), and 1 vacant seat. The Senate has 46 Republicans, 52 Democrats, and 2 Independents, who caucus with the Democrats. The average age of Members of the House at the beginning of the 113th Congress was 57.0 years; and of Senators, 62.0 years. The overwhelming majority of Members of Congress have a college education. The dominant professions of Members are public service/politics, business, and law. Most Members identify as Christians, and Protestants collectively constitute the majority religious affiliation...The average length of service for Representatives at the beginning of the 113th Congress was 9.1 years (4.6 terms); for Senators, 10.2 years (1.7 terms). One hundred one women (a record number) serve in the 113th Congress: 81 in the House, including 3 Delegates, and 20 in the Senate. There are 43 African American Members of the House and 1 in the Senate. This House number includes 2 Delegates. There are 38 Hispanic or Latino Members (a record number) serving: 34 in the House, including 1 Delegate and the Resident Commissioner, and 4 in the Senate. Thirteen Members (10 Representatives, 2 Delegates, and 1 Senator) are Asian American or Pacific Islanders. Two American Indians (Native Americans) serve in the House.¹

At the beginning of the 113th Congress, there were 108 Members (20% of the total membership), who had served or were serving in the military, 10 fewer than at the beginning of the 112th Congress (118 Members) and 12 fewer than in the 111th Congress (120 members)... The number of veterans in the 113th Congress reflects the trend of steady decline in recent decades in the number of Members who have served in the military.²

Congressional Schedule

The 113th Congress consists of two annual sessions. Generally, the House works two weeks in Washington, D.C. and spends one week back home in their legislative districts (See Table 1 below). The Senate takes about a one week break every month to return to their states, usually around federal or religious holidays.

TABLE 1. 113th Congress Schedule

Month	House Work Days Scheduled
January	11
February	11
March	12
April	12
May	12
June	16
July	14
August	2
September	9
October	14
November	8
December	8

¹ Congressional Research Service, Membership of the 113th Congress: A Profile, July 1, 2013

² Congressional Research Service, Membership of the 113th Congress: A Profile, July 1, 2013

TABLE 2. 113th Congress Legislation (as of August 25, 2013)

Legislation Type	Numbers
Bills (H.R. or S.)	4,549
Amendments (H.Amdt. or S.Amdt.) [2,309
Resolutions (H.Res. or S.Res.)	551
Joint Resolutions (H.J.Res or S.J.Res)	77
Concurrent Resolutions (H.Con.Res or S.Con.Res)	73
Laws (Public, Private)	31

Source: Library of Congress website, www.congress.gov

With the Congressional work schedule already limited, partisan gridlock in 2013 continues to stifle progress of legislative agendas in Washington, D.C. The focus in the early part of the 113th United States Congress was on averting the fiscal cliff and then mandatory budget cuts required by the sequester. There continues to be little room for compromise on policy issues, appropriations, or federal appointments. Expectations for resolving many of the major policy issues facing Congress – the federal debt, the federal budget, health care, Medicaid, Medicare, immigration, economic recovery and unemployment, conflicts in the Middle East, and homeland security, - appears dim. The specter of the 2014 primary, run-offs, and general election could also limit Congress' palate for compromise.

When the sequester (i.e. Budget Control Act of 2011) took place on March 1, 2013, it had the potential to impact numerous federal programs important to municipalities (see Table 3 below). At the local level, the sequester resulted in reduced funding for Head Start and furloughs at the Corpus Christi Army Depot. Fortunately, the number of furlough days was reduced due to cost-cutting in other area of the Army's budget. With Congress not yet approving the new 2014 federal fiscal year to begin October 1, 2013, the potential for another round of sequestration cuts is a possibility. Congress might have to pass a so-called "continuing resolution," funding the government at last year's levels, that would allow the sequester cuts to take effect.

TABLE 3. Programs Important to Cities & Towns Subject to Sequestration

<p><u>Department of Housing and Urban Development</u> Community Development Block Grants HOME Investment Partnerships Program Section 8 Housing Assistance Homeless Assistance Grants Choice Neighborhoods Program</p>	<p><u>Department of Homeland Security</u> FEMA State and Local Programs Flood Map Funding Emergency Food and Shelter Funds</p>
<p><u>Department of Justice</u> State and Local Law Enforcement Grants Juvenile Justice Programs Community Policing Programs</p>	<p><u>Department of Commerce</u> National Telecommunications and Information Administration Local Implementation Grants</p>
<p><u>Department of Agriculture</u></p>	<p><u>Department of Health and Human Services</u></p>

Rural Community Facilities Fund Rural Housing and Rental Assistance Rural Water and Waste Disposal Rural Business Assistance Programs Rural Broadband	Social Services Block Grant Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Public Health Programs Substance Abuse and Mental Health Funds
<u>Department of Transportation</u> AMTRAK Funding Transit Capital Grants – New Starts & Small Starts TIGER grants Essential Airport Services Portion of Highway Trust Fund supplemented from general Treasury funds included in MAP-21	<u>Environmental Protection Agency</u> Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund Superfund Brownfields
<u>Department of Energy</u> Weatherization Assistance Program	<u>Department of Labor</u> Workforce Investment Act
<u>Department of Education</u> ESEA, Title I IDEA, Head Start	

Source: National League of Cities

Numerous City departments are recipients of various federal grant programs that provide important services to Corpus Christi residents (see Table 4 below). The City’s federal legislative policy priorities will always include efforts to continue funding for these grant programs and monitoring legislation impacting those programs.

TABLE 4. Federal Grant Programs involving City Departments

Department	Federal Grant Program
Parks and Recreation	Latchkey After School Snack Program
Parks and Recreation	Senior Community Services, Elderly Nutrition Program
Parks and Recreation	Transportation Enhancement Grant (MAP-21)
Police Department	Office of National Drug Control Policy
Police Department	Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant
Police Department	Security Grant Program (Homeland Security, FEMA)
Airport	Runway Safety Project

The City’s General Federal Legislative Policy (see Table 5 below) will be used to guide Meyers and Associates and the Intergovernmental Relations Department in evaluating federal legislative proposals not covered by the City’s specific legislative policy initiatives. It is the same policy the City uses in evaluating legislation at the state level.

TABLE 5. General Federal Legislative Policy

The City <i>SUPPORTS</i> legislation and/or administrative actions that:	The City <i>OPPOSES</i> legislation and/or administrative actions that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance City revenues. Reduces or eliminates costs to the City. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undermine the principle of home rule and local control by the City. Results in the loss of revenue or negatively impacts potential revenue

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local control. • Protects policies previously established by City leadership through the Charter, ordinances, resolutions, and master plans. • Provides increased educational opportunities and job creation/retention for the citizens of Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend region through the Port of Corpus Christi authority, public schools, community colleges and universities. 	<p>growth to the City.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diminishes the authority of cities to regulate and manage their growth and development. • Nullify or undermine the City's policies contained in existing provisions of the Charter, ordinances, resolutions, and master plans, unless such changes expand the City's ability to manage its own affairs. • Imposes unfunded mandates that requires any expenditures by the City unless all costs are fully reimbursed by the mandating governmental entity.
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The following (see Table 6 below) are specific Federal Legislative Policy Initiatives that have been developed over the last 18 months by the Intergovernmental Relations Department in consultation with City staff, the Mayor and City Council, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, and other stakeholders. A resolution supporting these initiatives will be presented and, hopefully, adopted by the City Council. Council members may wish to alter, add, delete, substitute, or seek additional information on legislative issues on the priority list.

Feedback from the Council will also determine when to bring the resolution back for adoption. If no changes are made, the resolution can be put to a vote in one week (October 22, 2013). If changes are made or additional information is requested, the resolution would likely be delayed until November 2013.

TABLE 6. Proposed Federal Legislative Policy Initiatives

Tax Policy	
<p><i>Oppose taxation of the interest earned by investors in bonds issued by municipalities and other local governments.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protects a low-cost, market-driven means of financing to support local needs. 2. The federal savings from the proposed changes will not offset the economic strain that will burden state and local governments (and their local taxpayers) because those investments will become more expensive. 3. Without the tax-exemption, local governments would pay more to raise capital, a cost that would ultimately be borne by the taxpayers – resulting in less spending on infrastructure, less economic development, higher taxes or higher user fees.
	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The exclusion of interest income on municipal and private activity bonds will cost the federal government \$58 billion in 2013 and approximately \$540 billion over the next 10 years. 2. Assuming full repeal of the tax exemption would raise approximately \$500 billion over 10 years, doing so would finance a 4.5 percent across-the-board cut in tax rates.
<p><i>Support the Marketplace Fairness Act authorizing state and local governments to collect taxes owed on Internet and mail-order sales.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Levels the competitive business playing field between traditional bricks and mortar storefronts and internet and mail-order retailers. 2. Generates additional revenues for state and local governments. 3. Is not a new tax, but instead, an uncollected tax.
	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is a new tax burden for mail-order and internet businesses. 2. Allows states and local governments the power to tax beyond their borders. 3. Punishes consumers by increasing costs for products. 4. Places additional burdens on non-traditional internet and mail-order retailers, which have to keep up with differing tax

	laws in all states, territories, tribes and local governments.
Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	
<p><i>Support increases and oppose further reductions in funding for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME (Home Investment Partnership) program, homeless programs.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The need for services continues to grow, but Congress continues to cut funding for the programs. 2. The programs improve quality of life for low and moderate income individuals. 3. These programs provide sustained, tangible investments in local communities and attract other dollars; every \$1 of CDBG leverages another \$3.55 in other funding and every \$1 of HOME leverages another \$4 in other funding. 4. CDBG works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. CDBG is an important tool for helping local governments tackle serious challenges facing their communities.
	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding for these programs has had little impact on poor neighborhoods. 2. Eligibility is too broad and goes to wealthier communities instead of poor ones. 3. Congress needs to control federal spending to reduce the deficit.
Appropriations	
<p><i>Support continued funding for existing City grant-recipient programs and monitor legislation impacting those programs.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <p>Supports continuation of important services for children, senior citizens and ensures the safety of the public.</p>
	<p>CON:</p> <p>Congress needs to control federal spending to reduce the deficit.</p>
<p><i>Encourage Congress to pass annual budgets that prevent cuts required by the Budget Control Act.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is impossible to effectively plan, administer and implement federal programs nationwide operating on budgets that are only months long. 2. Government agencies, contractors, and employees need the security of an annual

	<p>budget in order to properly plan delivery of programs and services.</p> <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The federal appropriations process is complex and it requires the President and Congress to negotiate. Continuing resolutions are a reasonable tool to keep essential government function operating until a compromise is reached. 2. Congress needs tools to control out of control federal spending to reduce the trillion dollar deficits. Short-term budgeting and mandatory sequestration may be the only way to get control.
Military Installations	
<p><i>Support funding, staffing, and operations for the strategic missions at military installations in the Coastal Bend.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NAS-CC and CCAD make up the largest industrial employer in the Coastal Bend region. Its economic impact is more than \$2.8 billion. 2. More importantly, NAS-CC graduates 600 qualified aviators each year. NAS-CC also headquarters the Chief of Naval Air Training, head of the Naval Air Training Command. CCAD is the Department of Defense’s primary joint service facility for rotary wing and component repair. 3. Both provide critical strategic military value to the safety and security of this country. <p>CON:</p> <p>The City’s interest is economic and not what is in the best of the military. The leadership of the armed forces should not be influenced by economic considerations.</p>
<p><i>Support efforts to enhance missions, operations, and contracting opportunities to increase their military value.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protects against base re-alignment and closure. 2. The Coastal Bend has abundant air space and is an ideal location to take on additional missions, including UAS technology. <p>CON:</p> <p>The City’s interest is economic and not what is in the best of the military. The leadership of the armed forces should not be influenced by economic considerations.</p>
<p><i>Support military construction</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keeps local bases up to date to provide an optimum work environment.

<p><i>funding as identified by base commanders and personnel.</i></p>	<p>2. Allows the City to advocate for needs the local base officials are unable to advocate for.</p> <p>CON:</p> <p>1. If the military has needs they should advocate for them, not rely on the City to do so.</p> <p>2. Congress needs to keep federal spending in check.</p>
<p><i>Support legislation to exchange surplus Peary Place property from the Navy to the City for a restrictive easement on Cabaniss field property.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <p>1. The Navy has long wanted to unload this property.</p> <p>2. It is a fair market value transaction.</p> <p>3. Gives the City important highway frontage and water-front land for a potential commercial development.</p> <p>4. Would protect two key tracts of land from incompatible development.</p> <p>CON:</p> <p>1. The Navy should sell this property to the highest bidder.</p> <p>2. Legislation is not needed to complete the property transfer.</p>
<p><i>Oppose furloughs of military and contract employees forced by federal budget sequestration or government shut-downs.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <p>1. The last group of federal employees who deserve to be impacted by furloughs are military personnel, who make so many sacrifices for the good of the country.</p> <p>2. Pilot training, equipment repair work, and other tasks at NAS-CC, CCAD and NAS-K are critically important to the safety and security of the U.S. military.</p> <p>CON:</p> <p>1. Every federal agency needs to share in the sacrifice and pain caused by sequestration and shut-downs. The military, especially private contractors, should not be exempted.</p> <p>2. Military spending is part of the reason the country is in the financial condition it is in. Furloughs and other budget cuts must also come from defense.</p>
<p>Transportation Infrastructure & Development</p>	
<p><i>Support re-authorization of MAP 21, the federal transportation bill for at</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <p>1. To operate effectively, the federal highway program should be a multi-year program (five-year minimum) with transition financing provided to prevent systematic disruptions between reauthorization</p>

<p><i>least five years.</i></p>	<p>cycles.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. It is estimated the U.S. needs to invest at least \$225 billion annually from all sources for the next 50 years to upgrade the existing transportation system to a state of good repair and create a more advanced surface transportation system to sustain and ensure strong economic growth. 3. Highways are crucial to the U.S. economy. For each \$1 billion of federal spending on highway construction nationwide nearly 28,000 jobs are created annually.
<p><i>Support a sustainable source of revenue that will provide for stable funding for investment in transportation infrastructure and transit services.</i></p>	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Congress needs to hold the line on federal spending to reduce the deficit. 2. Streamlining environmental processes does not protect the environment. It encourages destruction of habitat. 3. A reauthorization without fundamental changes in transportation funding is a band-aid on a failing system.
<p><i>Support continued funding through the appropriations process of the Transportation Investment for</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transportation infrastructure is the backbone onto which a community's economic development is based. 2. Without a stable, reliable and sustainable funding source, a community is unable plan for services to meet the congestion, safety, and mobility needs of its citizens 3. More and more vehicles are running on electric or alternative fuels, so the funding for highways needs to change with the marketplace. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Congress needs to control the growth of federal spending. We need to wean states and local governments off funding from Washington. 2. Too much attention is paid to funding new infrastructure instead of repairing old, failing infrastructure. 3. <p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More funding for transportation infrastructure is needed to help communities recover from the economic downturn. 2. TIGER has been very successful in in putting people back to work and

<p>Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant Program.</p>	<p>revitalizing communities.</p> <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Congress needs to control the growth of federal spending. 2. Enough tax money has been spent on failed recovery programs. 3. The recovery is in full swing and additional investment in job creation through TIGER is not needed.
<p>Support continuation of and funding for the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA).</p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TIFIA loans are an attractive financing option because (a) the federal government offers a lower interest rate than is typically available to project sponsors through traditional bond markets and (b) the repayment terms are flexible, including the ability to defer repayment so a project can get underway and/or begin generating user fees or other revenues before repayment begins. 2. Multiple projects may be bundled together under one loan application as long as they are to be repaid by a common revenue source. 3. The federal government has entered a new era of fiscal constraints in which traditional grant-based funding will no longer be able to play as large a role, so innovative tools such as TIFIA are essential. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TIFIA relies on funding sources such as taxes, fees, and user charges—the very same revenues that are in short supply—for repayment over decades. This will reduce the amount of future year revenues available to meet future capital program needs. 2. Using TIFIA solely for its historically low rates can crowd out other sources of capital that do not receive similar federal subsidy. Such adverse impact may introduce inefficiencies and distortions to the flow of capital for transportation infrastructure. 3. TIFIA is most likely to be used in public-private partner ventures or tolling situations, which are not viewed favorably in Texas.

<p><i>Support initiatives to fund construction and upgrades of existing highway infrastructure to interstate standards to complete Interstate 69 throughout Texas.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completing additional segments of I-69 will enhance freight movement across Texas and promote international trade. 2. Currently, more than 230 miles of I-69 in Texas are co-signed on existing highways built to interstate standards with minimal investment by the federal government. The U.S. needs to invest in I-69 to connect the segments for improved linkage between Texas cities to serve freight traffic and to connect cities and rural areas.
	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The federal deficit and the on-going needs of existing interstate highways make it improbable to fund the billions needed to complete all segments of I-69. 2. States and local governments should invest in innovative financing processes to complete I-69 in Texas. 3. Upgrading existing highways to interstate standards is a lower priority than addressing congestion and safety needs.
<p><i>Support federal funding for construction of replacement of the Harbor Bridge (US 181) – a bridge of national significance.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FHWA is a project sponsor. The federal government should allocate funds to demonstrate its commitment and support for the project.
	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding is already secured through TxDOT. This is unnecessary and a waste of resources. 2. The existing bridge does not need to be replaced. If properly maintained it will last for many more years.
<p><i>Support funding for railroad system improvements and improve funding to maintenance dredging for the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to improve the Port of Corpus Christi.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The most efficient movement of freight is through multimodal transportation – truck, rail and shipping. The GIWW needs to be widened and deepened to accommodate bigger ships coming to the Port. 2. The Port has a Rail Master Plan, but needs funding to implement the project. 3. Investing in rail and GIWW will enhance economic development opportunities.
	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The City should focus on highway needs not on rail or shipping, which do nothing to address congestion or connectivity.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Port has sufficient resources for improvements it wants. 3. Congress needs to control the growth of federal spending, so don't waste funds on rail and GIWW improvements.
<p><i>Support funding for freight rail that will improve the rail connectivity and make the rail system safer and more efficient, improve environmental sustainability and encourage competitive rail access to ports.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Freight rail is an efficient and affordable way to move products around the country. Improving freight rail in and out of the port will enhance economic opportunities through multimodal transportation. 2. Rail infrastructure is old and in need of repair and may need to be relocated to avoid bottlenecks. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Freight rail improvements should be the responsibility of the private corporations that operate on the tracks. 2. Congress needs to control the growth of federal spending.
<p><i>Support funding for the Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration to continue to provide safe and efficient passenger and freight movement.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having adequate funding for air traffic controllers, TSA agents, inspectors, additional personnel, and providing financial assistance for runway and other safety improvements is essential to protect the health, safety and welfare of the traveling public. 2. Having adequate airport facilities and personnel is important to secure the pilot training mission of NAS-CC and NAS-K. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Congress needs to control the growth of federal spending. 2. TSA is not making air travel safer. Screenings are an invasion of privacy and of personal rights. 3. The FAA and TSA are driving up the cost of air travel for consumers.
<p><i>Support continued federal investment and priority into infrastructure to facilitate freight movement.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investment in highway, rail, and shipping infrastructure for the efficient movement of freight will enhance economic opportunities in the Coastal Bend. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Congress needs to control the growth of federal spending. 2. The existing infrastructure is adequate and does not need improvements.

<p><i>Support I-69 being included in the designation of the National Freight Network now under consideration by the federal Department of Transportation</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When I-69 is completed, it will connect Mexico, the U.S., and Canada through an interstate highway system that is ideally designed for the efficient movement of freight. 2. All 10 Texas deepwater ports and numerous shallow-draft ports and terminal on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway are served by the I-69 route. Long-haul interstate freight connections will be improved once I-69 is complete. There are two dozen major railroad truck-rail intermodal facilities near the multi-state I-69 route. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It has taken decades for I-69 to get to its present piece-meal status and will take decades more to fully complete the project through Texas. I-69 is not ready for the National Freight Network designation. 2. Getting this designation will only encourage more truck traffic increasing congestion on I-69. 3. There are limited transportation resources. The focus needs to be on taking care of the highways already built, not throwing money at such a long-term project.
<p>Gulf of Mexico</p>	
<p><i>Support legislation, such as S. 1555 or H.R. 3429 (Rigs-to-Reef Habitat Protection Act) or H.R. 6208 (REEFS Act) from 112th Congress, to prevent the U.S. Department of the Interior's destructive Operations Idle Iron program that weakens artificial reef creation.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council supported this policy in August 2012. 2. Artificial reefs are widely recognized in the scientific and sport fishing communities as significant fish habitat that promotes a diverse marine ecosystem. 3. Retaining these rigs as reef habitat may save billions of dollars by not removing the structures from the Gulf. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The federal government needs to permanently plug non-producing oil and gas wells in the Gulf of Mexico and dismantle oil and gas production platforms if they are no longer being used for exploration or production. 2. These structures are detrimental to navigation could result in excessive liability.

	<p>3. Offshore operators know from the beginning that they will have to clean up the area after they drill and produce oil and natural gas. This is in every lease.</p>
<p>Monitor Gulf of Mexico fisheries management proposals.</p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission was established by Congress in 1949 as a compact of the five Gulf States "to promote better utilization of the fisheries, marine, shell and anadromous, of the seaboard of the Gulf of Mexico, by the development of a joint program for the promotion and protection of such fisheries and the prevention of the physical waste of the fisheries from any cause." 2. The Coastal Bend is a prime recreational fishing location driving the tourism industry. Any potential regulations should be monitored to determine impacts on the local economy.
	<p>CON:</p> <p>This is not a legislative proposal. No action is needed.</p>
<p>Support implementation of the RESTORE Act.</p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that Texas receives its fair share of funding. 2. Protect against Congress re-allocating funding for other purposes.
	<p>CON:</p> <p>This is not really a legislative proposal, so Council doesn't need to take action.</p>
<p>Environmental Protection Agency</p>	
<p>Oppose overreaching, unrealistic, and unachievable standards and regulations for air, water, wastewater, and stormwater.</p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More than 90 communities across the U.S. are facing aggressive enforcement of expensive requirements from the Environmental Protection Agency. 2. Such requirements should take into consideration a community's on-going capital improvement plan to implement changes as well as a reasonable affordability factor so taxpayers are not burdened with a debt they are unable to manage. 3. Congress needs to give strict oversight to EPA and ensure no new regulations are adopted that will financially constrain local governments.

	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The regulations are not new and cities should commit all resources necessary to protect public health. 2. Cities are not moving quickly to address violations that threaten the public's health.
<p><i>Support appropriations to EPA to allow the agency to invest and serve as a partner to municipal governments for construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure to achieve air, water, wastewater and stormwater goals.</i></p> <p><i>Similar to H.R. 1877, H.R. 2707.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties are working with members of Congress on an appropriation in the \$2B-\$3B range to EPA for a pilot program to assist with implementation of environmental requirements. 2. EPA needs to work more closely with cities to understand the financial consequences of their regulations. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The regulations are not new and cities should commit all resources necessary to protect public health. 2. Cities are not moving quickly to address violations that threaten the public's health.
<p>Clean Water Act Re-Authorization</p>	
<p><i>Support renewal/reauthorization of Clean Water Act</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protecting rivers, lakes, streams, bays, estuaries, and other waters of the U.S. is critical to protecting the environment and economy of the Coastal Bend. 2. Maintaining the core principles of the CWA while preventing expanded regulations, more stringent standards and unfunded mandates. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A more stringent CWA is necessary since no major revisions have occurred in the last 25 years. Enforcement priorities have shifted. Water-quality science and technology have advanced. Compliance methods have improved. 2. The EPA has overstepped its authority with the CWA and has imposed standards and regulations and taken enforcement actions that are costly to implement and make it harder for business and industry to comply. 3. Reducing protection of the CWA will not ignite the economy, but will shortchange

	public health, the environment and the economy.
Support changes to the CWA that incentivizes investments in municipal infrastructure to achieve improvements in water quality.	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Federal agencies, especially the EPA, need to work more closely with cities to understand the financial consequences of their regulations. 2. Infrastructure improvements are a very costly, long-term investment. Cities need financial and regulatory relief in order to make the investments feasible.
	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cities are not moving quickly to address violations that threaten the public's health. 2. Congress needs to control the growth of federal spending and providing money and regulatory relief for state and local governments is unwise.
Support integrated planning initiatives to reduce sanitary sewer system overflows (SSOs).	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated resource planning (IRP) can assist in improving the efficiency of water utilities, thus conserving water resources, reducing costs, and bolstering community prosperity and vitality. 2. IRP is a more holistic and coordinated process for long-term decision making about sanitary sewer systems and has been used as an alternative to the EPA's contentious consent decree process. 3. Instead of focusing on drainage and conveyance and sometimes on flood control, new IRP options range from better site design to minimize runoff to implementation of best management practices (BMPs) such as artificial wetlands to control pollutants in runoff.
	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated resource planning only delays the process to make necessary improvements to reduce pollution and protect public health. 2. Cities could have implemented these processes prior to TCEQ and EPA taking enforcement action.
Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Re-Authorization	
Support renewal of WRDA, including	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WRDA is an essential tool to protect the environment and waters of the U.S. and to strengthen economic opportunity.

<p><i>repeal of earmark ban.</i></p>	<p>2. Allowing earmarks will allow Congress to prioritize funding for important projects.</p> <p>3. State and local governments and the private sector should not bear the financial burden for a federal responsibility.</p> <p>CON:</p> <p>1. WRDA does not prioritize USACE projects thus wasting federal dollars and causing an insurmountable backlog of projects.</p> <p>2. Many of these projects could or should be funded by state and local governments and the private sector.</p> <p>3. If a project hasn't received funding in several years, it should be de-authorized and there should be no new authorizations.</p>
<p><i>Support continued funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and ensure full utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) for maintenance and dredging projects.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <p>1. In fiscal year 2013, the HMTF will collect \$1.8 billion but spend only \$882 million. The nation's ports are under-funded and under-maintained and it is important for annual HMTF spending to increase.</p> <p>2. The Port of Corpus Christi and Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) must be widened and deepened to accommodate bigger ships and expanded opportunities from the Panama Canal.</p> <p>CON:</p> <p>1. Spending more on harbor maintenance may lead to over-dredging.</p> <p>2. The HMTF has inequities between receipt-generating and receipt-consuming ports that need to be addressed.</p> <p>3. The WRDA bill contains no earmarks so there is nothing specific to benefit the Port of Corpus Christi.</p>
<p>Higher Education</p>	
<p><i>Support funding for academic and scientific research, student financial aid, and other federal initiatives that strengthens Coastal Bend higher education institutions.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <p>1. Del Mar College and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi contribute to the future prosperity, growth and sustainability of the community.</p> <p>2. Job creation, economic development, and innovative research will help draw talent and retain an educated workforce who will become leaders in the community.</p> <p>3. University research and skill development help diversify the local economy.</p>

	<p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Congress needs to control the growth of federal spending. Higher education needs to become more efficient with tax dollars. 2. Recent college students are defaulting on federal loans at the highest rate in nearly two decades, reflecting "crisis" levels of student debt and a lackluster economy that leaves graduates with bleak employment prospects.
Appointments	
<p><i>Support prompt appointment and confirmation of a qualified, permanent U.S. District Judge for the Corpus Christi District to assure due process and equal justice under the law.</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The federal district judge position has been open for more than two years. 2. The Corpus Christi District deserves two full-time, permanent federal judges to handle the backlog of cases. 3. Congress should put partisanship aside and nominate a qualified judge to serve this region. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The process to identify qualified candidates for such an important position who can win Senate confirmation takes a great deal of time. 2. One sitting judge and two semiretired judges are capable of handling the caseload until a second judge is nominated.
National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)	
<p><i>Support amendments to the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act that delays implementation of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) premium increases to consumers and ensures adequate policy coverage at affordable rates.</i></p> <p><i>Note: Implementation date is</i></p>	<p>PRO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Premiums have the potential to increase by 25 percent per year, for the next four years until the full-risk rates are reached. 2. Eliminating the discounts for second homes and commercial buildings will hurt tourism-based economies, like Corpus Christi. 3. Premium increases will make it unaffordable to purchase a home in a certain flood zones. <p>CON:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. American taxpayers should not subsidize flood insurance premiums for homeowners who choose to live in a flood zone. The policyholder should pay the unsubsidized market rate. 2. NFIP needs stability-- it has lapsed 18 times in previous years - causing several

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interruptions in the program that prevented new policies from being issued.

3. NFIP is \$18 billion in debt. Additional premiums are necessary to support continuation of the program.
4. Policyholders living in hazardous areas will retain their subsidies until they sell their homes or suffer severe, repeated flood losses.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

113th Congress Legislative Presentation