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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senator Kolkhorst Protects Fort Bend County Hike and Bike Trails

AUSTIN - The Texas Legislature has passed a new local law aimed at protecting public hike and bike trails in Fort Bend County.

Aimed at settling a longstanding legal dispute over liability issues, House Bill 1166 was written and passed by Representative Phil Stephenson (R-Wharton) and sponsored by Senator Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham).

Neighborhoods and communities in Fort Bend County provide many benefits, including connecting communities and encouraging a healthy lifestyle. However, acquiring real estate for recreational use in Fort Bend County that is suitable for development of hike and bike trails can be both difficult and expensive. In many communities, utilizing an electric utility's right-of-way offers miles of public hike and bike trails that can be constructed at virtually no cost for land.

"Certain utility companies in Fort Bend County are willing to allow their land to be used without charge for recreation trails," Senator Kolkhorst said. "This legislation makes that happen, and extends liability protection for allowing the recreational use of these rights-of-way."

The legislation was originated by the Sweetgrass Subdivision in Richmond, which has a hike & bike trail that is built on a utility companies right-of-way. The hike and bike trail was in jeopardy of being dismantled because of liability issues, but with the passage of HB 1166, the liability issue is solved.

"I was proud to sponsor and pass HB 1166 with Representatives Stephenson, Zerwas, Miller and Reynolds," Kolkhorst said. "This is an important bill for our beautiful hike and bike trails in Fort Bend County because we will no longer have conflicts between the builders and the utility companies. It's a win for everyone."

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