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# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **GREATER HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTS REFORM OF TEXAS WINDSTORM INSURANCE ASSOCIATION ORGANIZATION ALSO ADVOCATES FOR INCREASE IN CIGARETTE TAX, LIMITED LIABILITY FOR CERTAIN PUBLIC UTILITIES**

HOUSTON – Greater Houston Partnership leadership today called for reforming the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA) by supporting the passage of C.S.H.B. 272. The resolution calls for legislation reform in the manner in which TWIA is regulated and run.

The bill proposes legislation reform, which includes:

- Requiring that all claims against TWIA be filed within one year from the date of the event giving rise to the loss and imposing a limitation period on all claims filed under TWIA policies;
- Creating a panel of experts to advise TWIA and its policyholders about coverage issues; and
- Creating an expedited process for handling TWIA claims including the creation of a non-judicial resolution procedure through an appraisal process, an administrative hearing or arbitration where appeals are streamlined and limited.

“TWIA provides insurance of last resort to thousands of coastal residents and we want to make sure that they are able to continue doing so,” said Jeff Moseley, GHP President and CEO. “Currently TWIA – a quasi-government entity – is subject to many of the same rules as for-profit insurance companies, and at the end of the day Texas taxpayers may be left holding the bag.”

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## Board approves other resolutions

In addition to going on record with its support of TWIA reform, GHP leadership also passed resolutions this week supporting legislation directing revenue from an increase in the cigarette tax and legislation providing limited liability for certain public utilities.

“The increase in the cigarette tax would have multiple benefits for all Texans including a reduction in youth and adult smoking, and long-term health savings to the state of more than \$4 billion,” Moseley said. “Our support of this legislation is really just an extension of a resolution GHP passed last year in Support of Preparation for the Implementation of the Affordable Care Act, which calls for ways to increase and identify healthy behaviors – such as quitting smoking.”

Providing limited liability for certain public utilities would allow agreements between political subdivisions and the utilities to create recreational areas on utility-controlled property.

“Current legislation compliments the current efforts of stakeholders involved with the *Bayou Greenway Initiative* – which leverages flood detention/retention and water quality projects to build multi-use trails along 10 of the Houston region’s major bayou arteries,” Moseley said. “These bayou trails run west-east throughout the Houston region and many utility easements run north-south throughout the region, providing miles of connectivity opportunities for this project.”

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The Greater Houston Partnership is the primary advocate of Houston’s business community and is dedicated to building regional economic prosperity. It represents 10 counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller. With more than 2,100 Member organizations, GHP represents approximately one-fifth of the region’s work force. Visit GHP at [houston.org](http://houston.org).

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