



STATE OF TEXAS

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TOM CRADDICK  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
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April 10, 2008

The Honorable Susan Combs  
Comptroller of Public Accounts  
Lyndon B. Johnson Building  
111 E. 17th St.  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Comptroller Combs:

Ensuring the safety and welfare of Texas children is our top priority. We have recently been faced with an extraordinary emergency situation which required a large scale relocation of citizens in Tom Green and Schleicher Counties.

We understand that these extraordinary activities come with substantial financial and personnel costs both to state agencies and to local governments. We would ask that you allow the Health and Human Services Commission to cover allowable legitimate emergency costs for state agencies and local governments using funding allocated in the current state budget utilizing the authority provided under Rider 8, Page II-75 of the General Appropriations Act.

We also understand that the costs of additional caseloads were not contemplated in the current budget and we are asking the agencies to prepare an estimate of this cost and of the emergency costs paid for through the Rider 8 authority for review by the appropriate committees as soon as possible.

Additionally, there will be a substantial cost associated with the ad litem representation of each of the persons involved in this situation. Normally, ad litem costs are borne by the county if the person being represented cannot afford to pay for the representation or if the counties are not successful in recovering the costs, which we are hopeful they will. Due to the magnitude of the number of cases involved in this situation, we recognize that unrecovered costs would likely cause severe hardship for the involved counties. We are currently working with the Office of the Governor, the Legislative Budget Board, and other appropriate entities to ensure that unrecovered allowable costs related to this emergency situation are reimbursed so that county budgets are not negatively impacted.

It is our intent that allowable emergency costs will be reimbursed to the appropriate agencies either through budget execution, an emergency appropriation next session, or another appropriate measure.

Once again, thank you for your service and we stand ready to assist in any way necessary to maintain the safety and welfare of our children.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Rick Perry and David Dewhurst. Rick Perry's signature is in black ink, and David Dewhurst's signature is in blue ink.

Rick Perry  
Governor

David Dewhurst  
Lieutenant Governor

Handwritten signature of Tom Craddick in black ink.

Tom Craddick  
Speaker of the House

cc: The Honorable Mike Brown, Tom Green County Judge  
The Honorable Johnny Griffin, Schleicher County Judge  
The Honorable Joseph W. Lown, Mayor of San Angelo  
The Honorable John Nikolauk, Mayor of Eldorado  
Commissioner Albert Hawkins, Health and Human Services Commission  
Mr. Jack Colley, Chief of Department of Emergency Management  
Members, Texas Legislature