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El Paso County Judge

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I appreciate the opportunity to share the experiences of the County in regards to the consolidated tax collection efforts undertaken in my community. The El Paso County Commissioners Court holds budgetary and administrative authority over county government operations. In my official capacity as County Judge, along with my colleagues on the Court, I must ensure that we deliver services to our constituencies that are effective and efficient. Many times, this means we work with other taxing entities and private partners to reach these efficiencies.

If we go back in time to the early 1980's, we know, at that time, the data as to who was delinquent in their property tax payments was greatly unknown. As the County and other taxing entities came to better understand the problem, not only in terms of the fiscal impact, but also in consideration of the daunting and expensive administrative undertaking this would result in, the decision was made to create the consolidated tax collection program. At the time, taxpayers were receiving multiple tax bills; this not only created confusion among the taxpayers, but inefficiencies among the taxing entities.

In an effort to provide improved public service, convenience and reduced costs, the County and 38 other entities (these include rural municipalities, school districts, the Hospital District, Community College and Municipal Utility Districts) entered into a contract to consolidate the assessment and collection of property taxes. Each year, the entities pay the City a "cost-per-parcel" for these services. In 2014, in an effort to deliver additional benefit our constituents, the County and the City entered into an agreement that allowed payments to be made at any of the County's satellite offices. The City of El Paso, on behalf of all taxing entities, then issued a request for proposals for legal services for the collection of delinquent property taxes and Collection Technology Hosting. These measures have maximized annual collections, and delivered on the County's commitment to improving outcomes for both El Paso residents and the County itself.

In conclusion, the consolidated tax collection program absolutely works in El Paso County and should be preserved, leaving the taxing entities to decide what options serve their communities best. Additionally, El Paso County would oppose any changes that would tie our hands in making the decisions of who would perform these functions.