



Office of the Mayor-President

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Parish of East Baton Rouge

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MELVIN L. "KIP" HOLDEN
Mayor-President

April 20, 2016

Mr. Casey Cashio
Council Administrator
222 St. Louis Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Mr. Cashio:

I respectfully submit this veto to Ordinance 16215, approved by the Council at its April 13, 2016, meeting. A copy of this veto message has this date been provided to all Metropolitan Councilmembers.

As I reviewed this legislation and received input, it became clear that while this legislation may have been well intended, it lacked a cohesive approach to make it work. This legislation calls for this government to provide tax breaks without a real plan. It lacks a comprehensive strategy and fails to look at the root causes of decline within the boundary lines identified in Councilman Delgado's legislation.

Under this legislation, developers within the district may apply to the Metro Council for exemption from paying taxes on business improvements for five years, with a five year extension. As I related to others, the Legislature made numerous cuts in the recent Special Session, and our Finance Department is still trying to determine the impacts those cuts will have on our City and Parish. We are facing the prospect of additional cuts as a result of this Session. We will have to evaluate the impact on various services we render all of our citizens. In the absence of knowing those factors, we will continue to follow our past budgetary practices.

The fiscal ramifications of Councilman Delgado's legislation are unknown. While cities in America are teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, our economy continues to remain strong. That is evidenced by our just released sales tax receipts report for February of this year.

We will not open our government to speculative spending at the taxpayers' expense. Our financial success in this parish is not based on gimmicks but on hard work with all segments of our community pulling together.

Don't gamble away the future of our great city and parish. Our citizens deserve better.

To all Metropolitan Councilmembers, our doors are open to find fiscal solutions to concerns we jointly share and we are willing to work with all of you to find an incentive plan with specific criteria that makes financial sense and benefits all of our citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Melvin L. "Kip" Holden
Mayor-President