



## TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

November 18, 2015

Ursula Parks, Director  
Legislative Budget Board  
1501 North Congress, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Ms. Parks,

Please consider this letter a formal request for the restoration of unexpended balance (UB) transfer authority for the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Pursuant to the General Appropriations Act Art. IX, §14.05, the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) may grant to state agencies authority to “transfer any unexpended and unobligated balances remaining as of August 31, 2016 for the same purposes for the fiscal year beginning September 1, 2016.”

As you know, at the recommendation of the LBB, the Texas Legislature designated as full cost recovery many of the licensing and regulatory programs administered by TDA to protect Texas consumers and agriculture suppliers. To ensure the implementation of full cost recovery, TDA’s bill pattern was amended and no longer provides authority to move funds across fiscal years. UB is an important budgeting tool that provided critical flexibility in managing the agency’s revenue stream.

TDA is in the process of adjusting its fee schedule to collect the revenue necessary to comply with the Legislature’s cost recovery mandate while continuing to provide important statutorily required services to Texans. These critical services include food quality inspections, fuel pump inspections and criminal background checks on pest control technicians.

When I took the oath of office as Commissioner of Agriculture, I entered into a contract with the people of Texas that I take very seriously. My administration’s mission is to promote and serve our state’s great agricultural industry and to protect the wellbeing of those who make it great – Texas families. The restoration of UB authority – which TDA also requested during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session – would provide TDA with flexibility in budgeting as it works to implement a fee schedule that benefits Texas agriculture producers and Texas consumers, and meet the agency’s responsibilities as determined by the Texas Legislature and outlined in state statute.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions about this request. I look forward to your quick response on this matter so TDA can continue its important work for the people and agricultural industry of Texas.

Sincerely,

Sid Miller  
Commissioner