

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



P.O. Box 94004
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9004
(225) 342-7015
GOV.LA.GOV

June 21, 2019

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable John A. Alario, Jr.
Louisiana Senate President
Louisiana State Senate
Post Office Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RECEIVED

JUN 20 2019

SENATE
PRESIDENT'S
OFFICE

RE: Veto of Senate Bill 229 of the 2019 Regular Session

Dear President Alario:

Please be advised that I have vetoed Senate Bill 229 of the 2019 Regular Session.

This bill, as originally drafted, created a transition structure should the voters approve of the incorporation of the City of St. George in the election that I called for October 12th. While it is arguable that this legislation is unnecessary at this point in time and presupposes a result of an election that has yet to take place, the original bill was silent as it related to the future obligations of any new government in St. George for outstanding debt secured by parish taxes. Through a negotiated agreement, the bill was amended without objection in Senate committee to provide for payment of existing debt in proportionate share. However, the bill was amended on the Senate floor to limit the responsibility of St. George for liabilities and other bonded indebtedness for services that have been provided to the residents of the St. George area for decades.

Many in the Baton Rouge community have expressed grave concerns about the finally passed version of this bill, including Mayor Broome and Baton Rouge Area Chamber. They agree with me that if the voters do approve of a newly incorporated City of St. George, there should be a thoughtful, fair, and equitable transition process. This transition structure can be set up at that time through a cooperative endeavor agreement between the parish and the municipality. However, that structure should ensure, as proposed in the engrossed bill this year, that "the proposed municipality created shall be liable for its proportionate share of the parish's outstanding debt secured by parish taxes and its proportionate share of unfunded liabilities of the parish, including pension plans and other post-employment plans." This will ensure that, should the voters approve of the incorporation, St. George, like any other municipality in the state, pays the bill for the services its residents have received and does not leave those obligations with those outside of its boundaries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards".

John Bel Edwards
Governor

cc: Honorable Taylor Barras
Speaker of the House of Representatives