

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Elizabeth Jones](#)
Subject: FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Private/Before Publication)
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From: Texas Sunset Advisory Commission <sunset@sunset.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 21, 2022 9:09 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission <Sunset.AdvisoryCommission@sunset.texas.gov>
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Private/Before Publication)

Submitted on Tue, 06/21/2022 - 20:06

Submitted by: Visitor

Submitted values are:

Choose the agency that you would like to provide input about
[Texas Commission on Environmental Quality](#)

Public Comments

1

First Name

Julia

Last Name

Mickenberg

Title

Dr.

Email

City

Austin

State

Texas

Your Comments or Concerns

Please see attached document

Your Proposed Solution

Expand regulatory capacity and enforcement of existing regulations and eliminate economic development from the TCEQ mission.

Attachment

[Testimony for TCEQ hearing.pdf](#) (81.38 KB)

My Comments Will Be Made Public

Yes

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am here as a citizen concerned about the impacts of climate change and pollution on public health as well as the economy. The impacts continue to worsen because of a failure to effectively regulate emissions. Given its mission to consider “economic development” along with protecting public health and the state’s natural resources, the TCEQ fails to prioritize the health and welfare of Texas citizens if doing so conflicts with the short-term economic impact on businesses. This is dangerous and shortsighted.

Ten US states produce half of all US emissions contributing to climate change. And among those ten, Texas emits the most.¹ Given that the United States is the second largest contributor in the world to climate change (behind only China) what the TCEQ does—or fails to do—can have a disproportionate impact on the country and even the world.² I support the Sunset Review commission’s findings that the TCEQ’s compliance and monitoring processes could be improved, **but we need to emphasize how high the stakes are for the people of Texas, especially economically disadvantaged people**, who are most likely to be impacted by both pollution and climate change and are least likely to be able to afford to prepare or respond to the impact of climate-change related events like flooding or the health risks associated with extreme heat or pollution that contributes to climate change.³ Indeed, **Texas as a state cannot afford to continue essentially ignoring the science behind climate change.** I’m continually flummoxed by the fact that climate change, which affects all of us, has become a partisan issue.

Despite the short-term benefits of fossil fuels in the Texas economy, which has contributed to lawmakers preventing the state from doing business with any entities that boycott fossil fuels, the risks of further investment in fossil fuels far outweigh the benefits. **The TCEQ needs to exert stronger leadership in order to protect the health, safety, and economic well-being of Texans in the face of climate change.** Texas already averages 60 dangerous heat days per year (second only to Florida), and those numbers are expected to nearly double by 2050. **Texas also experiences the worst threat from widespread drought among the lower 48 states, and scientists predict a 75% increase by 2050 from our current levels of drought. By 2050 Texas will have the highest danger in the country from forest fires, not to mention extreme weather or flooding.**⁴

Add to this the influx of migrants into Texas from Central America because they are no longer able to farm in their own countries because of climate change and we see a perfect storm in terms of issues that concern many people in Texas. Life as we know it cannot be sustained if the TCEQ does not do a better job of regulation. Moreover all of our legislators need to recognize the dire impact on our economy, health, and well-being.

¹ See <https://www.wri.org/insights/8-charts-understand-us-state-greenhouse-gas-emissions>).

² (see <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/092915/5-countries-produce-most-carbon-dioxide-co2.asp>).

³ (<https://www.npr.org/2022/06/21/1102389274/climate-change-costs-extreme-weather>).

⁴ <https://statesatrisk.org/texas/all>