



June 22, 2022

Texas Sunset Commission Members and Staff,

Chairman and Commission members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in the sunset review and process for our Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. My name is Becky Smith. I live in Houston, TX, in the Montrose neighborhood. I am a hiker, a star-gazer, a swimming-hole-finder, a fierce advocate for drinking tap water, and a Mama of a freshly-minted eight-year old girl who can nearly out-paddle me on a paddleboard, climbs higher in trees that I will go anymore, and the wife of a fly fisherman who disappears for hours to tie his own flies for always the next season to come.

In addition to those qualifications for caring about our natural and built environment and how they affect our human and public health, I appear before you as a representative of approximately 8,000 other Texas residents who are members of the organization I represent, Clean Water Action.

Clean Water Action's mission is: To protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life. Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups and coalitions, and campaigns to elect environmental candidates and to solve environmental and community problems. Like the Clean Water Act, which the organization was founded to help pass, Clean Water Action celebrates its 50th anniversary this year and I am proud to carry on the firmly-established strategy of strength in numbers.

There are few agencies, commissions or, frankly, individuals that touch each and every one of us as frequently, as closely, and intimately as one that regulates the quality of air that goes into our babies' lungs, the water that makes our blood flow through our arteries and veins, and has the power to staunch the loss of life and liberty that will be the result of human-made climate change.

I testify today as an individual with the privilege of choosing where I live and work, which is a luxury many people and families do not enjoy and for whose lives and livelihoods TCEQ's power and responsibility are even more determinant.

To that end, please accept the following limited recommendations. TCEQ should:

- Assess fines for pollution permit violations that are high enough to act as a deterrent to continued violations, and punish repeat violators more frequently;