

Phyllis Bailey

**STATEMENT RE CHASEWOOD SUBDIVISION – MISSOURI CITY, TX
THE SUNSET COMMISSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 1016 – AUSTIN, TX**

Good Morning, my name is Phyllis Bailey and I am speaking on behalf of the Chasewood Sub-division located in the City of Houston and Fort Bend County. Chasewood is an upper middle class predominately African-American community made up of professionals, small business owners, and retirees. In November 2010, we learned from a KHOU investigative report that our water was contaminated with high levels of saltwater, oil, radon gas, uranium and alpha particles. We have long suspected that something was wrong environmentally in our community. There are entire streets where dozens of people have died of cancer. We don't exactly know when the contamination began, but the impact to our community has been catastrophic. Today, we want to share with you what happens when the Texas Railroad Commission does not do its job. 44 out of 401 households have completed surveys which represents 11% of households. Information was collected for 164 individuals who resided in the 44 households during the time period of 1985 to 2016 and 60 of these 164 residents reported being diagnosed with cancer which is 37% of the residents of the 44 households. Residents reported using tap water from 6 months to 42 years.

For decades our families, children and pets drank and bathed in poisoned water. We suspect that the contamination may be linked to unmonitored oil/gas wells in close proximity to our groundwater well. That is, we recently came across correspondence (copies are in your packet) from the Railroad Commission to one of the abandoned well operators informing them of the health and safety risks of

their wells if not immediately plugged. In that 2009 letter the RRC stated that the abandoned wells “are leaking saltwater, oil or gas or are likely to leak such substances and that such leakage, occurring or likely to occur, will cause or will likely cause a serious threat of pollution or injury to the public health.” RRC dropped the ball in its failure to closely monitor these abandoned wells and it has placed us all in jeopardy. In addition to the cancer deaths that we’re aware of, it may be years before we know all of the long term health consequences associated with drinking that contaminated water.

After the investigative report aired, a subsequent meeting with Mayor Annise Parker, her leadership team, and city council members was held to where they attempted to reassure us that there was no radiation, radon gas or alpha particles in our water. However, the very next day the COH suspiciously moved quickly to plug our groundwater well and dismantled the water tanks behind our clubhouse. They did this without notifying the community, and prevented us from getting water samples from the tank to be tested along with our pipes. The residents did not have the wherewithal to stop this city action.

As you have heard, these families have been seriously impacted from the contamination in our water. We strongly support the Sunset Commission’s recommendations to improve the monitoring and enforcement of wells, as well as increasing the bonding requirements for operators.

However, for the residents of Chasewood the damage has already been done! Our community never thought that we would be traveling on a bus to the State Capitol to appear before this commission asking for clean, safe and uncontaminated water. **There is a clear and present danger.** We can’t dismiss the noted cancers as- being a medical anomaly. We ask as a community, where are

the people who are entrusted to safeguard our water supply from nearby oil/gas wells? Where do taxpaying communities like ours turn to hold agencies accountable for their negligence? In fact, we would like to request that the Department of State Health Services conduct a formal health survey to confirm whether a cancer cluster exists in our community."