

*PATRICIA A. GARCIA*

Patricia A. Garcia

Nordheim Sunset Review Group

My name is Patricia Garcia. I am a life-long resident of Nordheim , Texas. I am a retired teacher/coach from Nordheim I.S.D. I taught at Nordheim for 30 years. My husband, daughter and I have owned and operated a business in Nordheim for the past 19 years.

I want to speak to you about monitoring and enforcement of safety regulations that involve the oil and gas industry.

The Texas Railroad Commission needs to have more, much more.....enforcement over entities that violate regulations once permits are granted. I realize that this will mean more staff would be needed. More staff means more money would be needed to pay additional staff.....But what is at stake here? The Texas Railroad Commission has a mission statement that has 3 major points. Two of the three points of the mission statement are not being met. Stewardship of our natural resources and environment, plus the concern for personal and community safety are being by-passed by inadequate monitoring and enforcement when violations occur.

Another point that needs to be addressed are commissioners themselves. The commissioners should have professional qualifications for oversight of regulations and enforcement of such a complex and dangerous industry.

The final point that I want to bring to your attention has to do with violators of permit regulations. Many permit regulation violators are repeat offenders. For 2016, there have been 61 repeat oil and gas violators. In 2012, there were 144 repeat oil and gas violators. In 2012, there was a total of 1208 oil and gas violations- 761 considered major and 447 considered minor violations. Fines for violations of permit regulations need to be meaningful amounts. Fines need to be equal to the offense, and sufficient to provide a motivation to stop the violation. If this would occur, maybe oil and gas companies would have better operating practices.

You have already heard from some of my other Nordheim Sunset Review Group members. In light of what we have seen and experienced, the mission statement of the Texas Railroad Commission mandates a revision of current permitting processes to greater protect the health and safety of all Texas citizens.