

**TESTIMONY OF HARRIET M. IRBY AT THE SUNSET  
PANEL HEARINGS DECEMBER 15, 2010 AUSTIN  
TEXAS**

**In this era of huge governmental deficits, it has become critical for TECQ to become more effective in both enforcement and holding down costs.**

**The operations of TECQ presently fail both these tests**

**For example, the cost of an air emissions permit has not been raised since 1996. It varies from 100.00 to 450.00 according to facility size .Star Telegram Editor Mike Norman in a December 3 Star Telegram article “Air emission fees paid by industries seeking permits came up 4 million dollars short in 2009 of the TCEQ cost of issuing these permits”. Clearly the cost of these permits needs to be increased to fight the deficit.**

**Moreover, Texas pollution laws lack teeth. Many TCEQ staff want to be good watch dogs of public health, but their antiquated legal framework does not allow this. A TECQ report quoted in a December 10 Star Telegram article summarizes their dilemma, “Technology and science has allowed us to better understand the effects of oil and gas drilling have on public health**

**and the environment. The most up-to-date science and emission detection systems have greatly evolved over the past 14 years, unfortunately our laws have not.” “Because of this the staff has come to believe that oil and gas emissions...explosive methane,benzene,hydrogen sulfide and formaldehyde have been historically underreported.”**

**An industry-opposed rule change was proposed by the TECQ in June to better handle leak reporting and mandate vapor recovery systems. The industry said this would impact profits and fought it. TECQ officials countered that the industry cost factor was 750 million per year. This is less than 1.2% of the 61.9 billion the oil and gas industry earned in 2009.Vapor recovery systems for methane would actually produce industry profit.**

**Lets listen to these regulators who are now under fire from a public very concerned about the new phenomenon of urban drilling.It is no longer 1996. Higher fees and state of the art pollution control are the true path to a liveable Texas.**

**Harriet Irby**