

## Cecelia Hartley

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**From:** Sunset  
**Sent:** Monday, December 20, 2010 8:17 AM  
**To:** Cecelia Hartley  
**Subject:** FW: WEB EMAIL FEEDBACK

-----Original Message-----

From: Sunset  
Sent: Sunday, December 19, 2010 11:20 AM  
To: Sunset  
Subject: WEB EMAIL FEEDBACK

Name: Dr. Lisa Doggett

City: Austin  
State: TX

Organization: Physicians for Social Responsibility

Agency Name: Environmental Quality, Texas Commission on

Comments: I'm Lisa Doggett. I'm a family doctor here in Austin, and the co-president of Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility, a local chapter of the national organization Physicians for Social Responsibility. Since I helped form our local chapter in 2003, I've had a number opportunities to interact with the TCEQ, both directly and indirectly, regarding environmental issues that impact public health. And almost without exception, I've watched as the TCEQ has taken the side of industry and has blatantly failed to meet its goal, as stated in its mission statement, of promoting clean air, clean water, and safe management of waste.

As a practicing physician, I see my share of patients with lung disease, heart disease and other conditions that are directly impacted by our environment. I prescribe a lot of medications. I tell people to exercise, stop smoking, lose weight, and get their vaccinations. Yet I can only do so much to prevent asthma exacerbations, heart attacks, and pneumonia, for example, when I know my patients are exposed to polluted air and toxins in our water and food supply.

Medical studies now show that asthma which affects millions of Texas - is not only worsened by polluted air but can actually be caused by poor air quality. Here in Austin it's quite a dilemma for me as a physician to tell overweight kids to spend more time playing outside when I know our air quality is bordering on unacceptable.

It's also a dilemma to tell my patients at risk for heart disease to eat more fish, which is an important part of a heart-healthy diet, when I know that they could be exposed to mercury a known toxin.

Probably the best examples I have seen of TCEQ's failure to adequately consider public health impacts are the agency's repeated permitting of polluting coal plants across our state. Coal plants emit numerous toxins including nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide,

particulate matter and mercury, all of which are linked to death and disease. Particulate matter alone is responsible for tens of thousands of deaths annually. Coal plants also contribute significantly to global warming ♦perhaps the biggest public health threat today - through emissions of carbon dioxide. Improving air quality, primarily by reducing coal pollution, can save lives.

The Texas Medical Association has called for reductions in our reliance on coal because we know that coal is a dirty, dangerous, and deadly energy source. Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility is submitting a letter to this Committee, signed by doctors and nurses across our state, calling for stronger protections of our air and water quality, and increased public participation in the TCEQ permitting process.

Ensuring clean air and water is an enormous responsibility. Physicians and nurses across Texas urge you, on behalf of our patients and our families, to help reform TCEQ to meet that responsibility.

Resolution: To strengthen this agency, I ask that the Sunset Review Commission make several changes to the agency♦s structure in the course of its sunset review process.

- ♦ Change air permitting and enforcement processes to strengthen protection of clean air;
- ♦ Create space for public participation in the permitting process;
- ♦ Strengthen the Office of Public Interest Council;
- ♦ Strengthen water quality measures; and
- ♦ Strengthen waste permitting.