

Gayle Tisdale

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Representing the Nordheim Sunset Review Group

My name is Gayle Tisdale and I have been a resident of Nordheim, Texas for almost 3 years, although my ties to the community go back three generations. I have a small ranch that sits on the edge of Smith Creek approximately 3 miles from town.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today, as I represent the Nordheim Sunset Review group. You have heard other members of our community speak, but I would like to address the permitting process. After experiencing the RRC permitting process first hand, there are several reforms we would like to recommend regarding guidelines for the permitting process since this is a major function of the Texas Railroad Commission.

First, the RRC should recognize that there is a problem, when it appears that it is common practice to automatically grant permit applications if no one speaks up in opposition of it.

Second, the RRC needs to address public perception (or reality) that economic factors appear to be the overriding influence in permitting applications, rather than protecting people or the environment.

Third, the RRC should observe their own guidelines – for example the number of revisions allowed in an application is supposed to be two. In our experience with the waste permit process, numerous revisions of the original application were allowed without requiring the entity to start the application process over (which as I understand it, is a violation of their own process)

Fourth, the RRC needs to set an example by urging the EPA to revert back to the scientific chemical definition of hazardous waste, not a “politically correct” definition (If you have a chemical like benzene as a waste product, it is toxic regardless of whether the state defines it as non-hazardous!) Nothing should be classified as non-hazardous only by “political” definition.

Fifth, if the RRC wants to bring credibility to its fulfillment of its own mission statement, then permitting guidelines and oil regulations need to be revised to give equal value to the protection of the environment and public health and safety of Texas citizens as they do for support of the oil and gas industry production.

Finally, prior to issuing a permit for any facility, we recommend that at least one commissioner should be required to visit the proposed site and conduct a public hearing in the affected community to solicit opinions regarding the proposal.

Thank you for your time.