

Docket: 2023-107-SIP-NR

January 15, 2024

Reference: Bump Up from "Serious" to "Severe" for Dallas Air Quality

Dear TCEQ Staff,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the DFW State Implementation Plan (SIP) as it relates to the bump up from "Serious" to "Severe" for air quality for the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

My name is Colleen Murray. I am a retired veterinarian who made my way to Dallas, Texas, in 1985. I remember when Central Expressway was two lanes with stop lights on the entrance ramps. Needless to say, much has changed during the past 30-plus years. This city has blessed me, and I have known much success because of the infrastructure and the business mindset the city's founders advanced. That said, I believe our founders would be rethinking some of the city's goals in light of the changes we have seen in the health of our planet and its citizens due to "business as usual." Why have a booming business center when ALL life within your boundaries is not well? The trees, the animals, and the people are ill. The illness may not be apparent, but it lurks below the grey, dirty surface of our polluted air, water, and land. Let us talk about our air. The level of ozone and other pollutants is UNACCEPTABLE. What are the consequences to date? Are you aware that Dallas County has the highest rate of asthma in children in the country? Are you aware that the number one reason children are admitted to the ER in Dallas County is asthma? Are you aware that asthma is the number one reason children miss school in Dallas County? I am a Baby Boomer. NO ONE had asthma when I was a child. Why do they have asthma and other severe respiratory illnesses? Because the air that we rely on for life is sick, and it is making us sick. Some of us are dying.

Even our pets in Dallas County are afflicted with this horrible respiratory illness. Can you imagine not being able to breathe? No one can, not unless you have personally tried to suck in air that can not enter your body because your airways and lungs are in revolt. They know what is in the air that sustains our life is a slow, insidious poison. Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*, describes a country rich in resources and poor in capital. This country has embraced his advice and plunged forward, exploring, and exploiting every possible avenue to increase wealth at the expense of our resources. Well, we have achieved immense wealth. But what is the actual cost? Access to clean air and clean water are BASIC human rights. Do we have them? No, we do not. How many people in the history of our planet have had the ability to give the gift of health? You have that incredible power at the tips of your fingers. Please sleep well at night knowing that you have taken the first brave steps of putting the inhabitants of our great city before dollar signs. America was built by pioneer behavior. We need it again. It just looks different, but it is likely the most impactful decision you will ever make. It would be "business as usual" to let it slip through your fingers.

Respectfully,

Colleen Murray, DVM