

Abhi Kumar

Hi TCEQ,

I am writing to request that you improve overall air quality in Texas. With the recent directive from the EPA, I am thrilled that you have the opportunity not just to abide by the nation's laws, but the opportunity to make Texas a clean air state for ourselves and future generations. With each new ozone alert I receive from your team on my phone, I worry that this state may no longer be a suitable place to settle, especially compared to clean air elsewhere in the country. This is where your team comes into the picture. As a regulatory agency, you have the chance to set a higher, Texas-sized standard for air quality to ensure our lungs breathe clean air not just in 2024, but for the next 100 years. The perception of your organization's effectiveness is quite low — but you have a chance to turn that around right now. With each new industrial explosion, and with each new highway lane, and with growing automobile exhaust, Texans run the risk of severe cardiopulmonary disease, relative to our neighbors elsewhere in the country. You now have the opportunity to rectify these mistakes, these errors, so that the next time a chemical facility explodes near the Gulf Coast, you can penalize the negligence and prevent future deaths and toxic exposure. I urge TCEQ to implement the most stringent possible plan to bring the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (HGB) area back into attainment for ozone pollution in accordance with the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards as required by the Clean Air Act. And then I urge the TCEQ to implement even more ambitious plans to make Texas air the envy of the nation. This state could be a paradise even compared to the beauty in the Pacific Northwest, if only agencies and governments such as yourself would step up to the challenge. In the HGB area, a group of large industrial plants, oil refineries, and chemical and petrochemical plants are the largest ozone-precursor sources and need to reduce both VOCs and NOx emissions in order to improve Houston's air quality. NRG's Parish coal plant in Fort Bend County is by far the #1 source of NOx pollution locally. ExxonMobil's Baytown complex is the largest sources of VOC pollution. We obviously need energy, but if there is time to correct mistakes, there is time to do it right in the first place. Every toxic chemical facility that is allowed to poison our state is a failure of the TCEQ and the government of the State of Texas. You and your families may be far from the fumes, but I hope you can find it in your hearts and souls to cherish life in Texas and protect it from those who aim to turn this state into one giant factory and parking lot. Please create a plan that will turn Texas into the paradise that our people deserve, a plan that will make Texas air quality the best in the nation, and soon, the world. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Abhi