

## Greg Cole

The \$18.50 obd2 emissions fee for the DFW Metroplex and the Greater Houston Area was established in 2001, and was negotiated together with the \$7.00 safety inspection fee for a combined fee of \$25.50. According to the bureau of labor statistics and using their CPI Inflation Calculator, \$18.50 in April of 2001 would be worth \$32.86 today in 2024, and the combined \$25.50 fee would be worth \$45.29. The costs of operating an inspection station- rent, property taxes, electricity, insurance, supplies and labor have all risen significantly in the past 23 years, and never more dramatically than in the last 3 years.

The opportunity cost of utilizing an automotive oil change or repair bay to perform emissions inspections has never been higher. This is driving many stations to reduce the hours that they offer inspections or drop out completely.

For inspection only facilities the situation is even more dire. With continued increases in all the above mentioned expenses, and a revenue line that has not changed in 20+ years, survival is growing harder by the day. If the fee structure is not sufficient to support these inspection only stations, there will likely be nobody willing to dedicate the resources to pick up that additional inspection volume, and the problem many motorists are facing in the Austin area will become a statewide problem for all counties under the emissions testing mandate.

The not to exceed \$28.50 pricing concept would create more competition and would likely encourage more new inspection stations to open and more existing stations to add additional machines and inspectors. In a busy and hectic world people value their free time more than ever and are increasingly willing to pay more for convenience.

TSIA was involved in the negotiations with the DPS and TCEQ in late 2000 and early 2001. The end result was a net inspection fee to the station of \$32.50 for a dyno/safety test and \$25.50 for an obd2/safety. The state felt that a 1000 dynos were needed in both DFW and Houston to avoid long lines and extended drive times. With these reasonable fees and some encouragement from TSIA the industry stepped up and delivered and there has never been an issue in DFW or Houston with finding a convenient station or long wait times. I am extremely confident that with a reasonable fee the industry will again deliver and motorists in all emissions counties will have quick and convenient access to an emissions testing facility.