

Clayton Tucker

Our Texas oil and gas industry generates a LOT of toxic wastewater – more than 300 billion gallons a year. Texas agriculture needs a LOT of water – 2.9 trillion gallons every year. Can Texas farmers and ranchers trust the government to protect our land and water wells if that oil wastewater is used for irrigation?

Texas farmers and ranchers - and consumers - need more time to understand and comment on the rules being proposed. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality held a single public hearing on how they will regulate the cleanup and use of fracking wastewater on ag land. It lasted less than three hours.

I call on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to slow down. Extend the comment period. Hold hearings around the state, rather than just Austin. Hold hearings on farmer time – in the evenings, after we're in from the fields.

The Commission's proposal does not address which contaminants will be tested. Fracking wastewater can contain a soup of concentrated salts, heavy metals, naturally occurring radioactive materials and chemicals, including PSFAs (forever chemicals). Each fracked well can produce a different contaminant mix. Under TCEQ's proposal, the wastewater from various wells with various contaminants can be combined, so the farmer or rancher will have limited information on what went into the wastewater applied to their land. Same applies to neighbors who may get the runoff.

Worse, farmers and their neighbors have no recourse if the wastewater contaminates their land or water wells. Although the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality proposes monitoring and reporting, there is no fund set aside for damages. Oil and gas companies pay to dump fracking wastewater into deep injection wells. They should pay into a contingency fund to ensure pumping it onto our farms and ranches – and into our food supply - is a safe alternative.

I'm running for Texas Ag Commissioner to stand up for the farmers when government agencies try to run over them.