

Dear GEAA Members and Friends,

I just received the following message from Lize Burr of Alliance for Clean Texas and I had to share the news. The TCEQ Sunset Bill that is going forward will preserve your right to contest TCEQ Permits. My sincere gratitude to all of you who have worked through GEAA and other groups from across Texas to make this happen. Thanks to the many who showed up at the TCEQ Sunset Town Hall Meeting here in San Antonio last September, and to all of you who contacted your legislators to let them know that you want a State Environmental Agency that actually works for the people of Texas.

And, a very special thanks to those of you who contacted your legislators to tell them you didn't like the Chisum amendment. Working together we have accomplished a great deal! Congratulations!

Annalisa Peace  
Executive Director  
[Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance](#)

### **Message from Alliance for Clean Texas**

Friends,

This afternoon I have great news! A couple of hours ago, the Texas Senate took up HB 2694 on the senate floor. They voted for a "clean" version of the bill--the original bill that ACT supported back in March when it was introduced, the same one that many of you advocated for on ACT Lobby Day.

**Today, the Texas Senate sent a clear message to the Texas House that the TCEQ Sunset bill will not have the controversial contested case hearing amendments in its final version.** The Senate conducted a thorough dialog about the two contested case hearing amendments that the House put on the bill. Senator Huffman (the bill sponsor in the Senate) and Senator Watson discussed the contested case hearing amendments, the Office of Public Council (OPIC), compliance history and the economic benefit of non-compliance (aka, pay-to-pollute). This discussion established the Senate's legislative intent for TCEQ Sunset. On each of these issues, the senators agreed with the positions we've been advocating.

This vote is an important step forward. The bill will now be sent to a conference committee made up of five House and five Senate members. The conference committee will negotiate the final version of the bill. **By establishing a strong counter-point to the House version of the bill, the Senate has given Texas a second chance for the two-year TCEQ Sunset review to have a positive and meaningful outcome.** Clearly, the members of the conference committee will have a great deal of influence over the final version of the bill. We will keep you posted as the process continues and let you know if there are ways to help make the bill as strong as possible.

Honestly, I cannot tell you how it felt to hear Senator Huffman and Senator Watson discuss the bill. Two legislators were talking about the merits of enforcing environmental laws, of having an agency that does not reward polluters, of making sure that people can protect their land and contest a permit--and the entire chamber voted in support of that discussion. The debate in the House was just the opposite--the chance to bash environmental regulation and people's right to defend their health and their property. **If you're of the mind, please send your senator an email thanking her or him for supporting the Senate version of the bill.** It really was a vote for our environment--and for us.

**There is absolutely no question that your calls and emails made all the difference in the Senate.** Apparently, senators were asking, "What are these Chisum amendments I keep hearing about?" They knew walking in that there were serious problems with the House bill and were ready for the Senate to respond accordingly. Thank you for everything you've done. It's been a long time since we started talking about town halls and statewide calls and we've covered a lot of ground. Thank you.

As always, with my thanks and admiration,  
Lize

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