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Good morning.

I'm Kathryn Guerra, with Public Citizen's Texas office. I serve as director of the TCEQ Watchdog Campaign, an agency accountability and community capacity-building initiative we launched last year.

We've been closely monitoring this agency in that year, and have published a review of the agency's performance across its core functions: enforcement, rulemaking, permitting and public participation. We're tracking everything - from votes - to the rationale used to deny affected party status - to every comment on every rulemaking.

What we've found is concerning. Some might call it an indictment of this agency. What it shows is a failure of our state's environmental regulator to perform its most fundamental function: protection of human health and the environment.

And while the TCEQ and its leadership abandon their duty to protect residents and disregard public input as the bureaucratic box they must check before they bend to industry, we want communities to know: we hear you. We're inviting the public not only to read our review, but also to join us on *Monday, March 30, at 6 pm* to dive into the data and discuss your community's concerns about the TCEQ. Both the agency review and the event registration are available on our website, citizen.org/texas.

I'll share some of the highlights of our findings, all of which comes from publicly available data published by the TCEQ, using the remainder of my time:

- In 2025, the TCEQ conducted the fewest number of on-site investigations it has conducted in the past 8 years - even during the pandemic - conducting 3,600 fewer investigations than in 2024 and 5,200 fewer than in 2023.
- Despite foregoing several thousand on-site investigations, communities could not count on TCEQ to promptly respond to reported environmental complaints. The agency responded to just 300 - 3% - of 9,000 complaints within 24 hours last year. The majority of complaints - 54% - took 30 or more days for an initial response.
- The agency has a backlog of nearly 1,400 enforcement cases - more enforcement cases than it issued for the entire year in 2025. The agency should be working to achieve immediate compliance in those cases.
- TCEQ dismissed 100% of the comments it received from residents and advocates on Sunset-required rulemakings - including the Public Participation rulemaking. Rules that were drafted by the same TCEQ staff that the Sunset Commission said lacked sufficient consideration of the community's interest to begin with. Those rules were, however, modified in response to industry comments.
- Commissioners voted to deny 40% of the contested case hearing requests it received last year - despite OPIC recommending that commissioners grant 62% of the denied requests



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– meaning TCEQ commissioners ignored the recommendation to protect the public’s interest more often than not.

Communities deserve more, and legislators thought so, too. This agency must be accountable to the people. So we look forward to hearing more from communities and to engaging with legislators about how TCEQ’s weak regulatory approach harms communities across Texas on March 30.

Thank you.