TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

REPORT ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

In accordance with Chapter 2114 of the Government Code, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has established a customer service pledge, *Compact with Texans*, and appointed the director of Small Business and Environmental Assistance as the customer relations representative. The TCEQ Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) (*Appendix A*) was made available to thousands of TCEQ customers to measure customer satisfaction during the two-year period from 2012 to 2014.

Significant Findings

The most recent two-year survey period (March 1, 2012 to February 28, 2014) yielded the following results:

- The TCEQ received 2,403 responses to the survey.
- Overall satisfaction with the agency remained high at 76.4 percent.
- Taken as a whole, a majority of agency customers were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements.
- The total number of responses received once again increased for the online survey over the previous reporting period.

External Customers

The TCEQ divides its customer base into the following seven categories:

- Citizen
- Owner or Employee of a Regulated Company
- Environmental Group Representative
- Public/Elected Official
- Industry/Association Representative
- Neighborhood/Community Representative
- Attorney/Consultant

Although the TCEQ provides similar services to all of these customers, the agency also offers specific services tailored to meet the specific needs of customers in each of the categories.

Methodology

The TCEQ strives to make the Customer Satisfaction Survey available to the widest population in the most economic available way. In 2013, the TCEQ CSS Implementation Team worked on several activities to streamline the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Hard copy survey distribution included:

- providing surveys to all 16 regional offices to distribute at the conclusion of every investigation;
- offering surveys in literature racks located at the TCEQ Austin campus; and
- making surveys regularly available at Commission Agendas and Work Sessions, at Small Business and Environmental Assistance workshops and seminars, and at public meetings and hearings.

Increasing the visibility of the electronic survey was also emphasized and efforts included:

- adding a link to the online survey on the sidebar of every TCEQ web page;
- including the tagline "How is our customer service? Fill out our online customer satisfaction survey at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/customersurvey" to the bottom of all GovDelivery e-mails, responses from TCEQ e-mail proxy boxes, and regularly produced agency publications, including but not limited to *Take Care of Texas News You Can Use*, *The Advocate*, and *Natural Outlook*;
- adding the link on information distributed at occupational licensing exams;
- making the online survey the default screen on computers in the TCEQ information area at the Environmental Trade Fair and including the survey link in emails sent out after the event to all participants and exhibitors;
- revising hardcopy and electronic versions of agency letterhead and fax coversheets to include the survey web link to ensure all correspondence from the agency now includes information on how to access the customer satisfaction survey;
- promoting the survey through agency toll free numbers; and
- Use of newly designed graphic to greater highlight the survey on the web page and on distribution boxes.

The survey was designed to target as many individual agency customers as possible. Neither the online nor the hardcopy versions of the survey had a deadline for submission nor was either version tied to a specific incident of service. The survey is provided in both English and Spanish.

The survey methodology was consistent with prior years, requesting general information and asking respondents to rate multiple aspects of service elements. These service elements included:

- Overall Satisfaction with TCEQ;
- Staff;
- Telephone Calls;
- Written Information or Documentation; and
- Website.

The survey also provides space to document specific comments or concerns and provide contact information.

Additional changes made to the survey during this biennium included streamlining the survey to focus on key topics and to allow customers to complete it more quickly.

Survey Processing
The process of handling and responding to surveys was improved. Some of the improvements were:

- agency responses to CSS comments and requests for assistance are responded to event more promptly ;
- issues are correctly identified and addressed;
- responses are tracked to completeness; and
- responses are compiled and summarized on a quarterly basis.

Each office has a designated point of contact responsible for receiving the surveys, forwarding to appropriate staff, and ensuring required responses are drafted.

Surveys are reviewed by the customer relations representative to determine if a response to the customer is required (specific complaint, question, request to be contacted). These surveys are then forwarded to the appropriate office either to prepare a response. Draft responses were prepared by the appropriate agency office and submitted to the customer relations representative for review. The customer relations representative finalized the response and forwarded it to the customer, copying the agency office. If a contact number is provided the office may choose to call the customer and send a summary of the conversation to the CSS email box to be entered into the CSS database. Surveys that do not require a response are shared with applicable offices for their information. A unique email box was created, custserv@tceq.texas.gov, for the receipt and transmittal to the public and agency offices of all surveys and emails regarding the CSS.

Improvements to the processing of electronic surveys were also made by moving it into the agency's Content Management System. This change allows staff to download survey data directly into a database and eliminates the need for staff to manually enter the information. A validation check was added to the system in order to quickly identify possible spam submitted surveys.

Data Collection Time Frames and Cycles
Data collection began on March 1, 2012, the day after data collection ended for the *2010-2012 TCEQ Report on Customer Service*, and continued without interruption until midnight on February 28, 2014, to allow for two full years worth of data.

Data Limitations
As was the case with the *prior Report*, the 2014 edition is not scientific, in that even though surveys were made available to a very large population, the response rate, though improving, continues to be low, especially from select customer groups. The survey was also made available to an undefined universe by its presence on the website. The inability to identify and track the total universe receiving the survey also limits the ability to track the cost per customer surveyed.

Number of Customers Surveyed
The number of people who are served by the TCEQ is difficult to gauge, given the size and the ever-changing population of Texas. Both online and hardcopy versions of the survey were made available with the intent of reaching as many of these customers as possible.

Confidence Intervals and Levels
Staff could not determine what percentage of the general population would have chosen any given answer on the survey because it cannot be assured that a true random sample was taken. There was a significant response from the Owner or Employee of a Regulated Entity customer category, which accounted for 51.6 percent of total survey responses, likely due to the practice of distributing a survey at the conclusion of every inspection and cannot be assumed to accurately represent all the citizens of Texas. Also, some individuals completed numerous surveys because they represented multiple facilities that had been inspected and received a survey at each inspection.

Error and Response Rates
Online surveys that were submitted as spam, duplicates, or as potentially malicious activities were considered as submitted in error. They were deleted before being added to the database and were not tracked. The overall response rate could not be calculated due to the limitations in tracking the total number of individuals who may have received the survey link through the various electronic media and other agency publications and correspondence.

Customer Group Limitations
TCEQ staff continued making efforts to survey all customer groups. However, the survey may still have reached only a limited group of customers, who may submit surveys year after year. Customers without Internet access who have never visited the TCEQ campus in Austin, never been to a TCEQ regional office, and never attended an agency event, meeting, or hearing may have been excluded. Other customers that may have been excluded are those that may have conducted business with the agency through the mail or over the phone.

Analysis of Findings
During the period under review, the agency received 2,403 responses to the hardcopy and electronic survey.

This reporting period only 20.5 percent identified themselves as Citizens while 51.5 percent identified themselves as an Owner or Employee of a Regulated Entity. Also, while the total number of online surveys continues to go up, now up to 1121, hard copy response rate dropped 20 percentage points to 53.3 percent this reporting period.

The percentage of surveys that contained comments was 45.9 percent. The agency continued to forward survey responses containing positive and negative comments to

the appropriate agency staff. Agency staff contacted 20.9 percent of commenters because a response was deemed necessary.

While the figure is somewhat subjective, 6.1 percent of surveyed customers identified and suggested ways for the agency to improve. The most commonly received suggestions involved ways to improve the agency's website, licensing, and customer service.

The areas with the highest number of suggestions for improvement also reflected those with the most complaints received from respondents. Customers that reported being dissatisfied with communication with staff and had difficulty with forms, reports, databases, and web pages were not limited to a specific customer category.

At 65 percent, the website service element consistently received the lowest percent satisfaction across all customer groups. On average this service element is 12 percentage points lower than the other categories. Ease of finding information on the website was consistently ranked lower than the usefulness of the information on our website. In an effort to improve website navigation, in August 2013, we implemented responsive design to enhance mobile access to our site. Then in January 2014, we replaced our search engine, which is already beginning to improve search results. We also completed our second year of offering plain-language training to all employees who write content for the public site and are systematically introducing local navigation across the site.

Overall satisfaction with the agency for all customers remains high for the survey period at 76.4 percent.

All customer groups showed overall high satisfaction:

- **Citizen** was 53.6 percent;
- **Owner/Employee of Regulated Company** was 83.6 percent;
- **Environmental Group Representative** was 82.1 percent;
- **Public/Elected Officials** was 75.3 percent;
- **Industry/Association Representative** was 81.8 percent;
- **Neighborhood/Community Representative** was 55.8 percent; and
- **Attorney/Consultant** was 82.1 percent.

Overall, customer satisfaction with service quality elements remains very high:

- **Overall** was 76.4 percent;
- **Staff** was 87.9 percent;
- **Telephone Calls** was 78.0 percent;
- **Written Info/Docs** was 79.5 percent; and
- **Website** was 65.2 percent.

Table B-1 in *Appendix B* provides a breakdown by survey quality element and survey question of all 2,403 responses from all customers taken as a whole. Tables B-2 through

B-9 contains similar tables broken out by customer type. In addition, each table is followed by a brief summary of its responses.

Opportunities for the Future

The response rates indicate that one successful way to increase return rates is to directly distribute a hard copy of the survey to an individual. However, the unequal distribution to a single customer category indicates a need to also increase the response rates for all other customer groups.

As was discussed in the previous report the survey was streamlined to be consolidated into a one page self-mailer.

The agency will continue to find opportunities to increase responses to the electronic version as well as response rates for potentially underrepresented customer groups.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Performance Measures

Table 1 below identifies estimated performance for the customer satisfaction standard measures for 03/01/12 thru 02/28/14.

Table 1. Customer Satisfaction Survey Performance Measures

Measure	Performance
Outcome Measures	
Percentage of surveyed customer respondents expressing overall satisfaction with services received	76.4%
Percentage of surveyed customer respondents identifying ways to improve service delivery	6.1%
Output Measures	
Total customers surveyed	2,403*
Total customers served	Unknown**
Efficiency Measures	
Cost per customer surveyed	$1.11***
Measure	**Performance**
Explanatory Measures	
Total customers identified	Unknown
Total customer groups inventoried	7

* This number represents the total number of survey respondents for the period 03/01/12 to 02/28/14.

** The TCEQ serves all of the citizens of Texas, and this number is constantly changing. There are nearly 300,000 entities regulated by TCEQ that are subject to the compliance-history rules. Each year TCEQ receives more than 100,000 applications. The agency conducts almost 100,000 investigations annually. Therefore, the TCEQ is unable to meaningfully calculate the total number of customers served.

*** This cost includes only the cost for printing surveys and postage for hard copy surveys submitted.

APPENDIX A

HARDCOPY VERSION OF THE TCEQ CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

APPENDIX B

Table B-1. Responses from All Customer Groups

Survey Questions	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
General					
TCEQ Overall	49.4%	27.0%	11.4%	3.2%	8.9%
Staff					
Sufficiently Knowledgeable	68.9%	17.0%	6.6%	2.9%	4.7%
Professional and Courteous	77.5%	12.6%	4.2%	2.1%	3.6%
Telephone Calls					
Call Handling	57.2%	23.1%	10.6%	3.2%	5.9%
Length of Wait	50.0%	25.7%	14.5%	4.0%	5.8%
Written Info/Documents					
Accuracy, Helpfulness	54.5%	25.0%	9.5%	3.4%	7.6%
Web Site					
Ease of Finding Information	30.5%	29.1%	22.9%	8.1%	9.4%
Usefulness of Information	39.1%	31.7%	16.4%	5.9%	6.9%

All Customers
The agency received 2,403 total valid responses to the survey. The majority of respondents were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements:

- Overall – 76.4%
- Staff – 87.9%
- Telephone Calls – 78.0%
- Written Info/Documentation – 79.5%
- Website – 65.2%

Table B-2. Responses from Citizens

Survey Questions	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
General					
TCEQ Overall	36.3%	17.2%	12.0%	5.7%	28.7%
Staff					
Sufficiently Knowledgeable	53.0%	13.4%	12.3%	7.6%	13.6%
Professional and Courteous	60.6%	12.7%	10.2%	5.9%	10.5%
Telephone Calls					
Call Handling	47.5%	15.5%	11.4%	6.7%	18.9%
Length of Wait	42.4%	17.6%	15.8%	4.7%	19.4%
Written Info/Documents					
Accuracy, Helpfulness	40.7%	18.0%	12.6%	5.5%	23.2%
Web Site					
Ease of Finding Information	30.2%	20.3%	16.9%	8.6%	24.0%
Usefulness of Information	31.4%	20.3%	17.1%	11.1%	20.1%

Citizens
495 respondents (20.5 percent) identified themselves as citizens. The majority of citizens were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements:

- Overall – 53.6%
- Staff – 69.8%
- Telephone Calls – 61.6%
- Written Info/Documentation – 58.7%
- Website – 51.1%

Table B-3. Responses from Owners/Employees of Regulated Company

Survey Questions	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
General					
TCEQ Overall	53.5%	30.1%	11.6%	2.0%	2.8%
Staff					
Sufficiently Knowledgeable	74.0%	17.2%	5.3%	1.6%	1.9%
Professional and Courteous	82.9%	12.1%	2.4%	1.1%	1.6%
Telephone Calls					
Call Handling	59.8%	24.8%	10.5%	2.5%	2.3%
Length of Wait	52.0%	26.8%	14.1%	4.6%	2.5%
Written Info/Documents					
Accuracy, Helpfulness	58.1%	27.6%	8.7%	2.5%	3.2%
Web Site					
Ease of Finding Information	30.9%	31.4%	25.4%	7.8%	4.4%
Usefulness of Information	41.0%	35.3%	16.4%	4.5%	2.8%

Owners/Employees of Regulated Company
1,239 respondents (51.5 percent) identified themselves as an owner or employee of a regulated company. The majority of respondents were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements:

- Overall – 83.6%
- Staff – 93.0%
- Telephone Calls – 81.8%
- Written Info/Documentation – 85.7%
- Website – 69.3%

Table B-4. Responses from Environmental Group Representatives

Survey Questions	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
General					
TCEQ Overall	51.2%	31.0%	8.3%	6.0%	3.6%
Staff					
Sufficiently Knowledgeable	72.0%	15.9%	4.9%	2.4%	4.9%
Professional and Courteous	78.8%	11.3%	5.0%	3.8%	1.3%
Telephone Calls					
Call Handling	52.8%	26.4%	8.3%	5.6%	6.9%
Length of Wait	46.3%	28.4%	11.9%	1.5%	11.9%
Written Info/Documents					
Accuracy, Helpfulness	53.5%	28.2%	11.3%	2.8%	4.2%
Web Site					
Ease of Finding Information	39.2%	26.6%	21.5%	6.3%	6.3%
Usefulness of Information	48.7%	26.9%	14.1%	5.1%	5.1%

Environmental Group Representatives
84 respondents (3.5 percent) identified themselves as an environmental group representative. The majority of respondents were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements:

- Overall – 82.1%
- Staff – 88.9%
- Telephone Calls – 77.0%
- Written Info/Documentation – 81.7%
- Website – 70.7%

Table B-5. Responses from Public/Elected Officials

Survey Questions	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
General					
TCEQ Overall	49.4%	25.9%	16.0%	5.6%	3.1%
Staff					
Sufficiently Knowledgeable	70.2%	21.7%	2.5%	3.1%	2.5%
Professional and Courteous	79.0%	13.4%	3.8%	1.9%	1.9%
Telephone Calls					
Call Handling	54.8%	27.4%	10.3%	2.7%	4.8%
Length of Wait	50.7%	25.4%	16.2%	5.6%	2.1%
Written Info/Documents					
Accuracy, Helpfulness	55.1%	27.2%	8.9%	4.4%	4.4%
Web Site					
Ease of Finding Information	27.7%	32.6%	22.7%	9.2%	7.8%
Usefulness of Information	37.6%	35.5%	18.4%	5.0%	3.5%

Public/Elected Officials
166 respondents (6.9 percent) identified themselves as a public/elected official. The majority of respondents were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements:

- Overall – 75.3%
- Staff – 92.1%
- Telephone Calls – 79.2%
- Written Info/Documentation – 82.3%
- Website – 66.7%

Table B-6. Responses from Industry/Association Representatives

Survey Questions	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
General					
TCEQ Overall	48.7%	33.1%	10.4%	3.2%	4.5%
Staff					
Sufficiently Knowledgeable	60.9%	26.5%	7.3%	3.3%	2.0%
Professional and Courteous	76.0%	17.8%	2.1%	0.7%	3.4%
Telephone Calls					
Call Handling	54.5%	28.0%	13.6%	0.8%	3.0%
Length of Wait	42.9%	34.1%	18.3%	2.4%	2.4%
Written Info/Documents					
Accuracy, Helpfulness	51.7%	28.3%	10.3%	4.8%	4.8%
Web Site					
Ease of Finding Information	20.4%	32.1%	30.7%	9.5%	7.3%
Usefulness of Information	33.1%	33.8%	23.5%	4.4%	5.1%

Industry/Association Representatives
161 respondents (6.7 percent) identified themselves as an industry or association representative. The majority of respondents were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements:

- Overall – 81.8%
- Staff – 90.6%
- Telephone Calls – 79.8%
- Written Info/Documentation – 80.0%
- Website – 59.7%

Table B-7. Responses from Neighborhood/Community Representatives

Survey Questions	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
General					
TCEQ Overall	34.9%	20.9%	4.7%	0.0%	39.5%
Staff					
Sufficiently Knowledgeable	60.5%	2.3%	14.0%	2.3%	20.9%
Professional and Courteous	59.0%	20.5%	7.7%	7.7%	5.1%
Telephone Calls					
Call Handling	45.7%	8.6%	14.3%	2.9%	28.6%
Length of Wait	32.3%	22.6%	12.9%	3.2%	29.0%
Written Info/Documents					
Accuracy, Helpfulness	47.4%	15.8%	5.3%	5.3%	26.3%
Web Site					
Ease of Finding Information	29.4%	20.6%	8.8%	17.6%	23.5%
Usefulness of Information	36.1%	22.2%	13.9%	13.9%	13.9%

Neighborhood/Community Representatives
45 respondents (1.8 percent) identified themselves as a neighborhood/community representative. The majority were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements:

- Overall – 55.8%
- Staff – 70.7%
- Telephone Calls – 54.5%
- Written Info/Documentation – 63.2%
- Website – 54.3%

Table B-8. Responses from Attorneys/Consultants

Survey Questions	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
General					
TCEQ Overall	56.0%	26.2%	8.3%	6.0%	3.6%
Staff					
Sufficiently Knowledgeable	71.4%	19.0%	6.0%	1.2%	2.4%
Professional and Courteous	81.7%	11.0%	3.7%	0.0%	3.7%
Telephone Calls					
Call Handling	66.2%	21.1%	8.5%	1.4%	2.8%
Length of Wait	53.8%	29.2%	7.7%	6.2%	3.1%
Written Info/Documents					
Accuracy, Helpfulness	61.5%	21.8%	5.1%	6.4%	5.1%
Web Site					
Ease of Finding Information	29.5%	35.9%	19.2%	6.4%	9.0%
Usefulness of Information	41.6%	37.7%	11.7%	3.9%	5.2%

Attorneys/ Consultants
90 respondents (3.7 percent) identified themselves as an attorney or consultant. The majority were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements:

- Overall – 82.1%
- Staff – 91.6%
- Telephone Calls – 85.3%
- Written Info/Documentation – 83.3%
- Website – 72.3%

Table B-9. Responses from Other

Survey Questions	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
General					
TCEQ Overall	56.4%	23.6%	10.0%	0.9%	9.1%
Staff					
Sufficiently Knowledgeable	77.2%	11.9%	5.0%	1.0%	5.0%
Professional and Courteous	80.4%	9.3%	4.1%	0.0%	6.2%
Telephone Calls					
Call Handling	64.5%	18.3%	7.5%	4.3%	5.4%
Length of Wait	61.4%	19.3%	13.3%	.3.6%	2.4%
Written Info/Documents					
Accuracy, Helpfulness	65.1%	16.0%	10.4%	0.9%	7.5%
Web Site					
Ease of Finding Information	39.6%	30.8%	18.7%	5.5%	5.5%
Usefulness of Information	51.6%	31.9%	6.6%	4.4%	5.5%

Other
123 respondents (5.1 percent) identified themselves as other or did not answer Question 1. The majority of respondents were satisfied to very satisfied with all agency service elements:

- Overall – 80.0%
- Staff – 89.4%
- Telephone Calls – 81.8%
- Written Info/Documentation – 81.1%
- Website – 76.9%