



Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Report on Customer Service

March 1, 2014 – February 29, 2016

Introduction

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is the state's leading environmental agency and provides many services related to air and water quality, water supply, and waste management. Almost all of our services require interaction with our customers, Texans and people in other states and countries.

Texas Government Code Chapter 2114 requires state agencies to establish customer service standards, called a *Compact with Texans*. Under our compact, we commit to:

- Respond to requests for public information through telephone calls, correspondence, and e-mail in a timely, efficient and courteous manner, in accordance with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations;
- Provide clear, concise, and accurate information related to all applicable permitting, licensing and registration procedures, through written materials, phone assistance, and our official website;
- Establish channels for public participation in all aspects of our operations, including, but not limited to, permitting, rulemaking and compliance, and customer service assistance;
- Track and respond to customer service complaints in a timely manner; and
- Maintain safe, clean, and accessible facilities across the state.

Chapter 2114 also requires state agencies to gather information about certain service elements provided by that agency (such as internet services and complaint-handling) and then report every two years on this gathered information. The TCEQ developed the Customer Satisfaction Survey to gather this information and to also help verify compliance with our Compact with Texans.

About our Survey

We designed the survey for use by all of our customers that interact with us or our website. The survey contains eleven questions – the first three questions ask the customer to give general information about themselves while the remaining questions ask them to rate their level of satisfaction with certain service elements (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest). Next is a comment section, followed by an optional contact information section. See [Appendix C: Customer Satisfaction Survey](#) for a copy of our survey, containing text in English and Spanish.

Distribution

The most cost-effective method for reaching all of our customers is to distribute a web page link for the online survey; <tceq.texas.gov/customersurvey> for the English version and <tceq.texas.gov/encuesta> for the Spanish version. You will find these links in many locations, found typically on our:

- Web pages;
- Response emails from program-area email boxes (i.e., proxy boxes);
- Emails from the email service GovDelivery;
- Letters; and
- Publications.

Besides the online survey, we also have hardcopies available in the foyer of our regional offices and office headquarters in Austin. This allows survey access to anyone visiting our offices. Also, staff commonly distribute hardcopies to their customers that are undergoing an investigation.

Excluded Customers

While our survey is open to all Texans and our other customers, some of them may not be aware of the survey. This would include customers who never interact with us and our website, as well as some customers who interact with us solely by phone.

Survey Design Notes

The following subsection describes some of the potential nuances of the data based on design. See the section [Opportunities for the Future](#) for a further discussion on improving survey data.

In question one, customers identify themselves by selecting one of the eight customer categories. We have customers that can fit into multiple categories, which might cause a customer to accidentally score a survey under a potentially less accurate category. For example, a customer that marks *Citizen* on the survey, but bases their satisfaction solely on their interactions with us as a consultant, would impact the *Citizen* statistics instead of the *Attorney/Consultant* statistics.

In addition, a customer that selects the customer category *Other* might actually fall into another customer category. This could impact the *Other* statistics instead of the statistics for another customer category.

On survey questions four through 11, the customer rates their satisfaction level on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest. A customer might rate differently than another customer because of different interpretations of this scale (e.g., one customer's five might be another person's three).

Also, customers can base their survey on one or many TCEQ-related interactions; meaning one customer might base it on several interactions, while another could base it on only one (such as one telephone call, or a visit to our website). This can cause issues when attempting to identify trends should a significant amount of customers base their surveys (or specific survey questions) on older interactions.

Processing

Once we receive a survey, we determine which program area(s) would benefit from the information and send it to them. This includes customers suggesting improvements to our services. We also check the survey to see if the customer needs any assistance. For example: if a customer is very unsatisfied with the ease of finding information on our website (i.e., enters a score of one for survey question #10), we may:

- Contact them to find out what information they were looking for;
- If they couldn't find it, send this information to them;
- Ask for their suggestions to improve our website; and then
- Send those suggestions to the appropriate program area.

An important note: we can only provide assistance to those who enter their phone number or email address in their survey. The time it takes to provide assistance varies, depending on the type of assistance needed.

Received Surveys

During this reporting period, we received 2,235 surveys – 834 hardcopy and 1,401 online. See Table 1: *Total Received Surveys*, for a comparison to the previous reporting period (March 1, 2012 through February 28, 2014).

Table 1: Total Received Surveys

	Previous Period	This Period	% Difference
Total Hardcopy	1,282	834	-35%
Total Online	1,121	1,401	+25%
Total	2,403	2,235	-7%

Costs

Some of the variables we need to determine the total cost for our survey are not available. For example, some surveys might require time from four or more staff members to provide the customer with an appropriate response, but we don't log their time or wages because it would impact the speed of our response time and increase staff costs from the time spent logging this information. However, we can estimate some of the costs associated with our survey.

One of the costs associated with our hardcopy survey is postage (i.e., we pay for the mailing costs when the customer returns the survey). We received 834 hardcopy surveys during this period; the current rate for mailing a one-ounce letter is \$0.49, so we estimate our postage cost at \$408.66. Our hardcopy survey also has an associated publication cost; we estimate that there were no publication costs during this reporting period because we only used hardcopy surveys printed in the previous reporting period. For our electronic survey, and excluding staff costs, we estimate a zero-cost because there are no direct costs for this distribution method.

Limitations

During this reporting period, an unknown amount of customers submitted the 735 anonymous surveys (33% of the total surveys). We cannot determine a precise number of customers for these surveys; therefore, we based many of the values in the [Survey Results](#) section on the number of surveys received instead of the number of customers surveyed. This allows us to include all surveys into the results.

Response Rate

Typically, you calculate a response rate by dividing the number of customers surveyed by the number of customers who received the survey. Our survey method does not fit this model. As discussed in the previous subsection, we cannot determine the number of customers surveyed during this reporting period. In addition, we cannot determine the number of customers who received a survey because:

- For hardcopy surveys – logistically, it would be inefficient to track the number of customers who took a hardcopy survey; and
- For online surveys – we cannot track the number of customers who went to our webpage and noticed the survey link.

Survey Results

This section highlights the results from our survey during this reporting period. See the following section, [Opportunities for the Future](#), for a discussion on any of the issues mentioned below.

General

The following survey results include surveys received March 1, 2014 through February 29, 2016. In Table 2: *Customer Survey Performance Measures*, you will see general information and results from this period, with an explanation for each of the results in the following bullets.

Table 2: Customer Survey Performance Measures

Survey reporting period	March 1, 2014 – February 29, 2016
Total number of surveys	2,235
Percentage of surveys rating overall satisfaction with the TCEQ	80%
Percentage of surveys identifying ways to improve our services	4%
Total estimated customers served	27,699,157
Total customers identified	1,405
Total customers surveyed	Unknown
Total customer groups inventoried	8
Average response time	4 days

- **Total number of surveys:** We received 2,235 surveys from March 1, 2014 through February 29, 2016.
- **Percentage of surveys rating overall satisfaction with the TCEQ:** A total of 2,114 surveys provided a score for question four, how satisfied are you with the TCEQ. There were 1,691 surveys with a score of 4 or 5 (i.e., overall satisfied). This means that 80% of these surveys expressed overall satisfaction with the TCEQ, an increase of about 4% compared to the last reporting period.
- **Percentage of surveys identifying ways to improve our services:** Out of the 2,235 surveys, 87 suggested an improvement which is 4% of the total surveys. The majority of suggested improvements were suggestions for improving our website.
- **Total estimated customers served:** As the leading environmental agency for the state, we serve all Texans, including people that interact with us from other states or countries. We are unable to calculate the number of customers outside of Texas, but estimate the average number of Texans during this period at 27,699,157 (based on the Texas Department of State Health Service's population estimates for 2014 through 2016).
- **Total customers identified:** From the 1,500 surveys submitted with contact information, we identified approximately 1,405 customers that took our survey; 72 of these customers submitted multiple surveys.
- **Total customers surveyed:** This value is unknown because we cannot determine who submitted the 735 anonymous surveys and if any of these customers submitted more than one anonymous survey.
- **Total customer groups inventoried:** As shown on the survey, there are eight customer categories – seven descriptive categories, and the category *Other*.
- **Average response time:** We identified 206 surveys where customers needed assistance. The average time it took us to respond was four days.

Overall Satisfaction

In Table 3: *Overall Satisfaction*, you will see the percent of surveys with a score of 4 or 5, for each customer category and survey question. The customer category with the fewest surveys (32), and the lowest percentage of satisfaction, was *Neighborhood or Community Representative*. The customer category with the most surveys (1,049), and some of the highest percentages, was *Owner or Employee of a Regulated Company*.

The survey question with the lowest percentages was question 10, the ease of finding information on our website. Survey question 6, staff is professional, received the highest percentage of satisfaction.

Table 3: Overall Satisfaction

	Attorney or Consultant	Citizen	Environmental Group Representative	Industry or Association Representative	Neighborhood or Community Representative	Other	Owner or Employee of a Regulated Company	Public or Elected Official	Combined
Satisfied with the TCEQ	75%	62%	82%	88%	44%	83%	88%	85%	80%
Staff is sufficiently knowledgeable	85%	69%	91%	89%	67%	89%	94%	93%	87%
Staff is professional	88%	72%	91%	95%	69%	90%	96%	97%	89%
How we handle telephone calls or e-mail inquiries	81%	67%	85%	88%	61%	90%	91%	91%	84%
Timeliness of our response to customer complaints	81%	66%	83%	88%	60%	89%	91%	91%	83%
Accuracy and helpfulness of our written information	81%	64%	77%	84%	54%	89%	89%	84%	81%
Ease of finding information on our website	55%	53%	60%	63%	38%	68%	70%	67%	63%
Usefulness of information on our website	68%	57%	75%	79%	54%	76%	80%	83%	73%

Descriptive Statistics

You can find the following information in [Appendix A: Survey Descriptive Statistics for March 1, 2014 – February 29, 2016](#):

- **Number of Surveys Received:** The number of surveys we received for each customer category.
 - **NOTE:** We received incomplete surveys so the total number of scores for each question varies. For example, there are 32 surveys in the customer category *Neighborhood or Community Representative*, but only 20 have a score for question eight (timeliness of our response to customer complaints).
- **Mean:** The average score.
- **Median:** When you arrange all of the values in ascending order, it is the middle score. If the median is five, it means that 50% or more scored a five.
- **Mode:** The most common score.
- **Standard Deviation:** The amount of scoring variability. The bigger the number, the more variation in the scores.

This is the first report to include the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation; therefore, we attached [Appendix B: Survey Descriptive Statistics for March 1, 2012 – February 28, 2014](#) for comparison of values between these two periods.

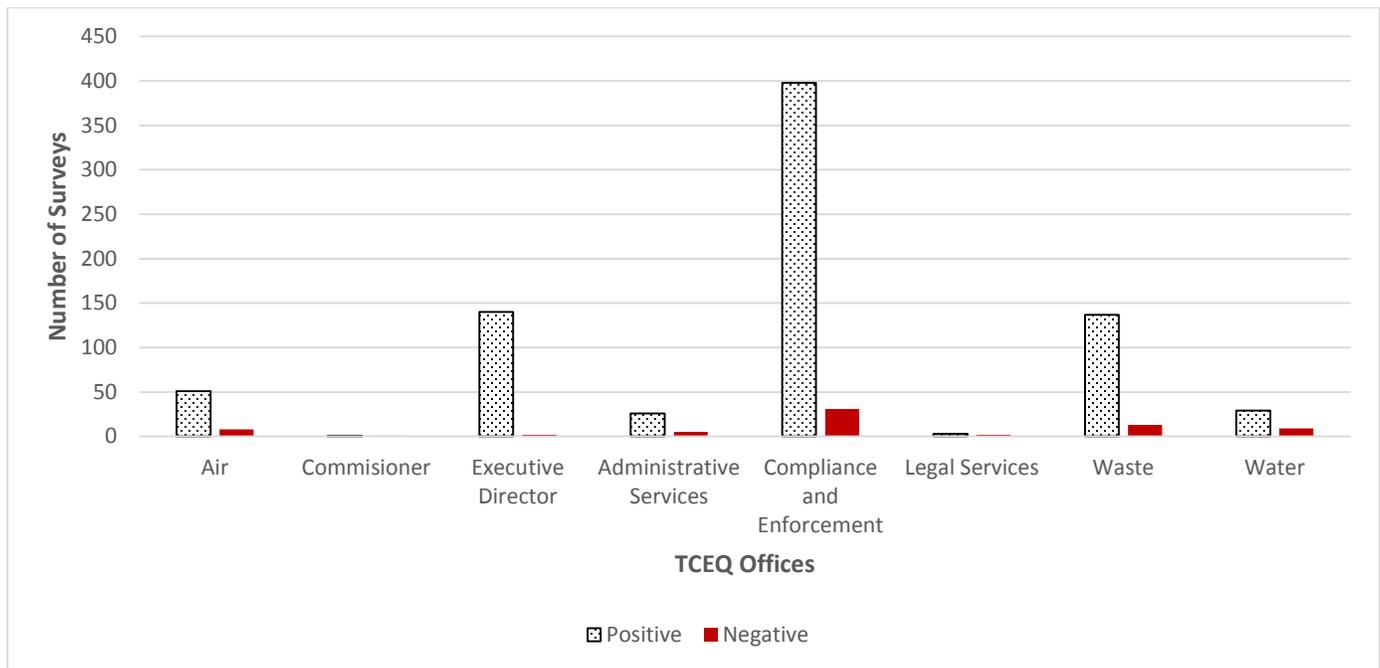
Both appendices do not include confidence intervals for the mean (an interval containing the population mean, within a certain amount of confidence). This is because confidence intervals require random sampling, but our sample was not random (e.g., customers submitting multiple surveys). Since we only interact with a portion of our entire customer population, it is very unlikely we could have a true random sample and get significant results.

Survey Comments

For the reporting period, 1,398 surveys included comments. We categorized each comment by its service elements and staff interactions, and also noted if the customer’s experience with that service (or staff member) was a positive or negative experience.

From the comments about staff, 92% of our customers said it was a positive experience, and these customers scored staff professionalism and knowledgeability (survey questions five and six) the highest on their surveys. Figure 1 shows the total number of positive and negative experiences with staff, grouped together at the office-level.

Figure 1: Customers’ Experiences with Staff



From the comments about our services, the one mentioned the most was our website, and 88% of these customers had a negative experience; specifically, many stated that they went to our website looking for something but couldn’t find it (or find it easily).

Opportunities for the Future

For this reporting period, 80% of the surveys reported overall satisfaction with the TCEQ. Even with this high value (which is higher than the previous reporting period), we strive to do better. This section suggests opportunities to improve our survey data, increase the amount of survey data, and most importantly, improve our services.

Improving Survey Data

In the subsection [Survey Design Notes](#), we discussed potential nuances of the data based on the survey’s design. We might minimize these nuances, thereby improving our survey data, if we change our survey. For example, we could reword survey question one, along with the customer

categories, to help customers select the most accurate customer category. However, any changes may have negative impacts that we will need to study.

Increasing Survey Data

In 2012, we removed redundant survey questions which reduced publications costs (and saved paper) for our hardcopy surveys. Now using a shorter survey, we expected an increase of surveys from the customers that were discouraged by the longer survey. However, we had seven percent fewer surveys this period which suggests there are other factors that influence a customer's decision to submit a survey. For the next reporting period (March 1, 2016 – February 28, 2018), we will test other distribution methods, including the use of new advertising graphics on our website, to encourage more customers to submit surveys.

Improving Our Services

Website

The subsection [Overall Satisfaction](#) shows survey question 10 (ease of finding information on our website) with the lowest percentages; nonetheless, it is about 4% higher than the previous reporting period's combined overall satisfaction score. The majority of negative comments about our website mentioned navigation issues – many stated that they went to our website looking for something but couldn't find it (or find it easily). Staff will continue to revise text and links to use plain language, and to test and implement new strategies on our website to improve navigation.

Customer Complaints

As discussed in the subsection [Processing](#), we review surveys to see if a customer needs any assistance – this includes customer complaints. In the previous reporting period, the average response time was seven days after we received the survey; for this reporting period, it was four days. This decrease could be partly due to our new, faster response procedures we started in September 2015. In addition, this quicker response time could be one of the reasons why our combined overall satisfaction for survey question eight (timeliness of our response to customer complaints) increased from an average of 3.9 to 4.3. We will continue to use our new response procedures when any surveyed customers need assistance.

Appendix A: Survey Descriptive Statistics for March 1, 2014 – February 29, 2016

	Attorney or Consultant	Citizen	Environmental Group Representative	Industry or Association Representative	Neighborhood or Community Representative	Other	Owner or Employee of a Regulated Company	Public or Elected Official	Combined
Number of Surveys Received	111	559	59	183	32	145	1,049	97	2,235
<i>Survey Questions</i>									
Satisfied with the TCEQ	4.0	3.5	4.3	4.4	2.9	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2
	5, 5, 1.4	5, 5, 1.8	5, 5, 1.3	5, 5, 1.1	3, 1, 1.8	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.3
Staff is sufficiently knowledgeable	4.4	3.8	4.6	4.5	3.8	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.4
	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 1.6	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.6	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 1.1
Staff is professional	4.5	4.0	4.7	4.7	3.9	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.6
	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.5	5, 5, 0.7	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.6	5, 5, 0.6	5, 5, 1
How we handle telephone calls or e-mail inquiries	4.2	3.8	4.4	4.5	3.6	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.3
	5, 5, 1.4	5, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.2
Timeliness of our response to customer complaints	4.2	3.6	4.3	4.5	3.6	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.3
	5, 5, 1.3	5, 5, 1.8	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.8	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 1.3
Accuracy and helpfulness of our written information	4.1	3.6	4.1	4.4	3.4	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.2
	5, 5, 1.3	5, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 1	4, 5, 1.6	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.3
Ease of finding information on our website	3.4	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.7
	4, 4, 1.3	4, 5, 1.6	4, 5, 1.4	4, 5, 1.2	3, 3, 1.5	4, 5, 1.3	4, 5, 1.2	4, 5, 1.2	4, 5, 1.3
Usefulness of information on our website	3.7	3.4	4.0	4.1	3.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.0
	4, 4, 1.3	4, 5, 1.6	4, 5, 1.1	4, 5, 1	4, 4, 1.6	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1	4, 5, 1.3

KEY

Mean (average score)
Median (middle score), Mode (most common score), Standard Deviation (variability)

Appendix B: Survey Descriptive Statistics for March 1, 2012 – February 28, 2014

	Attorney or Consultant	Citizen	Environmental Group Representative	Industry or Association Representative	Neighborhood or Community Representative	Other	Owner or Employee of a Regulated Company	Public or Elected Official	Combined
Number of Surveys Received	90	495	84	161	45	123	1,239	166	2,403
<i>Survey Questions</i>									
Satisfied with the TCEQ	4.3	3.3	4.2	4.2	3.1	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.0
	5, 5, 1.1	4, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 1.1	4, 5, 1.1	4, 1, 1.8	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 0.9	4, 5, 1.1	4, 5, 1.2
Staff is sufficiently knowledgeable	4.6	3.8	4.5	4.4	3.8	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.4
	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.5	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1
Staff is professional	4.7	4.1	4.7	4.6	4.2	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.6
	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 1.4	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 0.7	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 0.9
How we handle telephone calls or e-mail inquiries	4.5	3.7	4.1	4.3	3.4	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.2
	5, 5, 0.9	4, 5, 1.6	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 0.9	4, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 1.1
Timeliness of our response to customer complaints	4.3	3.2	3.8	4.0	2.6	4.1	4.3	4.2	3.9
	5, 5, 1.2	3, 5, 1.7	4, 5, 1.5	4, 5, 1.3	2, 1, 1.8	5, 5, 1.4	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 1.4
Accuracy and helpfulness of our written information	4.3	3.5	4.2	4.2	3.5	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.2
	5, 5, 1.1	4, 5, 1.6	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 1.1	4, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 1.2
Ease of finding information on our website	3.7	3.3	3.9	3.5	3.1	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.7
	4, 4, 1.2	4, 5, 1.5	4, 5, 1.2	4, 4, 1.1	4, 5, 1.6	4, 5, 1.1	4, 5, 1.1	4, 4, 1.2	4, 5, 1.2
Usefulness of information on our website	4.1	3.4	4.1	3.9	3.5	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.9
	4, 5, 1.1	4, 5, 1.5	4, 5, 1.1	4, 4, 1.1	4, 5, 1.5	5, 5, 1.1	4, 5, 1	4, 5, 1	4, 5, 1.2

KEY

Mean (average score)
Median (middle score), Mode (most common score), Standard Deviation (variability)

Appendix C: Customer Satisfaction Survey



Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Comisión de Calidad Ambiental de Texas

Customer Satisfaction Survey Encuesta de Satisfacción del Cliente

1. Please identify yourself: (mark only one) *Favor de identificarse: (marque sólo una)*
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen <i>Ciudadano</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Public/Elected Official
<i>Funcionario público/elegido</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Group Representative
<i>Representante de grupo ambiental</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney/Consultant <i>Abogado/asesor</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry/Association Representative
<i>Representante de industria/asociación</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood/Community Representative
<i>Representante comunitario/de vecindad</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Owner/Employee of Regulated Company
<i>Dueño/empleado de una compañía regulada</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) <i>Otro (favor de describir)</i> |

2. What Texas county do you live in? *¿En cuál condado de Texas vive?* _____

3. What was the nature of your contact with us? (mark only one)
¿Cuál era la naturaleza de su contacto con nosotros? (marque solo uno)
- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Information
<i>Información general</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Resolution
<i>Resolución de problemas</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Assistance <i>Ayuda técnica</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permitting/Licensing Assistance
<i>Ayuda con permiso/licencia</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigation/Inspection
<i>Investigación/Inspección</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe)
<i>Otro (favor de describir)</i> |

How satisfied are you? (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being very satisfied)
¿Qué tan satisfecho está? (en una escala de 1 a 5, 5 siendo lo muy satisfecho)

4. With the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality <i>Con la Comisión de Calidad Ambiental de Texas</i>	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
5. That our staff is sufficiently knowledgeable <i>Que nuestro personal está suficientemente informado</i>	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
6. That our staff is professional <i>Que nuestro personal es profesional</i>	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
7. With how we handle your telephone calls or e-mail inquiries <i>Sobre cómo atendemos sus preguntas por teléfono o correo electrónico</i>	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
8. With the timeliness of our response to customer complaints <i>Con la puntualidad de nuestras respuestas a quejas de clientes</i>	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
9. With the accuracy and helpfulness of our written information <i>Con la exactitud y utilidad de nuestra información escrita</i>	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
10. With the ease of finding information on our website <i>Con la facilidad de encontrar información en nuestro sitio web</i>	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
11. With the usefulness of information on our website <i>Con la utilidad de información en nuestro sitio web</i>	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
12. Comments: (on staff performance, agency service, or suggested improvement) <i>Comentarios: (sobre el desempeño de nuestro personal, el servicio de la agencia, o sugerencias para mejorar)</i>						

Additional space for comments on the back. *Espacio adicional para comentarios al dorso.*

Contact Information: (optional) Información de contacto (opcional)

Name: *Nombre:* _____

Phone Number: *Número de teléfono:* _____ E-mail: *Correo electrónico:* _____

Note: An e-mail address of a member of the public that is provided for the purpose of communicating electronically with a governmental body is confidential in most, but not all, cases. See more information at <www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/privacy>. Also, individuals are entitled to request and review their personal information that the agency gathers on its forms. They may also have any errors in their information corrected. To review such information, contact us at 512-239-3282.
 Nota: Una dirección de correo electrónico de un miembro del público que se proporciona para el propósito de comunicarse electrónicamente con una entidad gubernamental es confidencial en la mayoría, pero no todos, de los casos. Vea más información en <www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/privacy>. Además, individuos tienen derecho de pedir y examinar su información personal que la agencia reúne en sus formularios. También tienen derecho de que se corrija cualquier error que haya en su información. Para examinar tal información, comuníquese con nosotros al 512-239-3282.

TCEQ-10333 (12/13)