

At the Central Tx Env. Summit with TCEQ Chairman Shaw and
Senator Donna Campbell

Speakers:

Andy Saenz – TCEQ Communications Director

Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D. – TCEQ Chairman

Senator Donna Campbell – Texas Senate, District 25

Andy Saenz: Good morning and welcome to the Second Central Texas Environmental Summit. We're so glad that so many of you have joined us this morning for this very important discussion about environmental issues. I'm Andy Saenz. I'm the Communications Director for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and I'm going to be up here this morning helping with introductions and hopefully keeping us all on schedule.

We have a lot of good information to share with you today with some outstanding speakers who are going to give us just absolutely the latest information on current environmental issues facing our state and many of them facing us directly here in central Texas. And I wanted to give you just a quick rundown of our agenda for today, so you'll know what to expect. First, we're going to hear from our local elected officials and we are appreciative of the fact that even with the legislative session going on today, they have made time out of their day to be here with us today. That says a lot about how important this meeting is to them and to all of you. We'll also hear from our three TCEQ Commissioners who have joined us this morning. They have cleared their schedules and we're so happy that they are able to join us. And we'll also hear from a commissioner from one our sister agencies, who which I think you'll enjoy that conversation as well. Then after a very short break, we're going to get into a very detailed discussion about some timely issues and then finally we're going to ask you to join us next door. I don't know if you've already been over there, but we've got an exhibit room full of displays: about thirty different displays from our agency, from our sister agencies and some of our partners in the area; some outstanding information and you're going to get a chance to talk to our experts face-to-face. Any question you want to ask next door, we have the answers.

Before that, though, before I introduce our very first speakers, I wanted to kind of set the stage, so that you guys can understand some of the big issues that we're going to be talking about. The first map that I'd like to show you is this one that you're going to see a little bit later on. This is the official drought map for the state of Texas and if you've never seen this map before, basically if it's red or if it's orange, that's bad news. So as you can see, throughout the state, we've got a lot of bad news. As a matter of fact, the only areas in the state that aren't facing a drought if you can see them are the white areas to the right to the east Texas and out towards the west and those are the two only little pockets in the entire state that are not having some kind of problem with drought in our state and we're going to hear a lot more about that. The second map that I wanted to show you very, very quickly is the Eagle Ford Shale. This was a little bit harder to read, but basically if you look towards the west near Laredo, that's where the Eagle Ford clay starts, the shale starts, and it goes all the way under the central Texas area, 23 counties,

At the Central Tx Env. Summit with TCEQ Chairman Shaw and
Senator Donna Campbell

all the way up to the Bryan College Station area; 23 counties that are in the Eagle Ford Shale and every little dot there is oil and gas activity that's currently happening or permitted in the next couple of years, a tremendous amount of activity and one of our experts will talk to us about how we're looking for energy in this area and also, specifically, how the economic boom has occurred because of all of this activity, so that's what we have in store for us. Right now, though, we'd like to get started with some of our speakers and I'd like to ask the chairman of our commission, Chairman Brian Shaw to help us with the very first introductions.

Bryan Shaw: And it is my distinct honor to welcome you to the Central Texas Environmental Summit. This year is cosponsored by Senator Leticia Van de Putte, which you see down here. Just give her a hand. It's also my pleasure to take this opportunity to thank Senator Donna Campbell who is the host center, this being her district. And Railroad Commissioner David Porter. Thank you, David. Thanks for your leadership and for the comments I know we're going to be hearing from you today and I want to express the appreciation that I have. I know we're going to have a great opportunity to work together in supporting an issue, to help work together to take care of the Texas environment, to continue the progress that we've made, so I look forward to working with you on that.

I can say as I look out across this room, I've been watching the room fill all morning and it's been exciting to see that, but I can that Texans are proud of our natural resources and it's evident from today's attendance that we are all committed to protecting and conserving our beautiful state and I think as we're going to hear today that starts and is best done when we have all the people across the state working together and so I appreciate your desire, willingness, and efforts to be a part of that. And in Texas, we can have it all: a thriving economy, safe development of energy, and a strong job market all while protecting the environment. Through sound science, Texas leads the way towards this balance and I think that's critical. If you look at the numbers, Texas has done a stellar job of trying to strike that balance. We do have great economic development and, yet, we still are continuing to see environmental improvements and enhancements and by working together, I'm convinced we can continue to improve even on our successes that we've had today.

To help our communities, we've got expert boots on the ground in the San Antonio Regional Office under the leadership of Area Director Susan Jablonsky and Regional Director Joel Anderson. You wouldn't think, I mean, we write our rules as clear as we can, but we do try that, but recognizing the bureaucracy and the challenge that we have, our staff and employees are here to help you understand the state's environmental rules, so I encourage you to encourage others to always use us as a resource to help ensure not only compliance, but find ways to enhance our ability to protect our environment. We have the largest air monitoring network in the world. In the San Antonio area, we have nineteen air monitoring stations that help give us data about the – help us to assess the quality of air in the region. Our TCEQ staff helps counties deal with the unique challenges brought on by energy production; both challenges and opportunities there in the Eagle Ford Shale with our partners at Railroad Commission and the Texas Department of Transportation. We've been working cooperatively with them to develop

At the Central Tx Env. Summit with TCEQ Chairman Shaw and
Senator Donna Campbell

workshops and offer those workshops to county leaders to learn about our state's environmental rules and how to develop solutions to those challenges we face. It's no secret that CNBC named the Lone Star State and America's top state for business. A great thing, a third time of it in the top rankings, so excellent, and I think that points to that balance and success we've had, especially when you look at that with the environmental protections that we've been able to accomplish while maintaining those high-ranking in that assessment. And Forbes.com agrees by ranking Texas the best state for jobs. We know that ensuring a clean environment for Texans gives us all the quality of life that makes our state an attractive place to locate for working, for bringing in business, developing new business opportunities because we know we need to have a great place to live and a great place to work to continue attracting those kinds of economic opportunities. I promise you that the TCEQ will continue to lead the way in innovative protection of the environment and in the words of Governor Rick Perry, "We'll do our part to keep Texas the best place in the nation to live, work, grow your business, and raise a family."

I have the esteemed privilege this morning of introducing a brand-new senator for District 25 who is also doing her part to help Texas. A conservative woman of faith and a working mom, Donna Campbell was elected to the Texas Senate in 2012 to represent six counties: Baxer, Comal, Guadalupe, Hays, Kendall, and Travis. Senator Campbell and her husband, Stan, live down the road in New Braunfels with the youngest of their four daughters. What you may not know is that Senator Campbell began her career as a nurse. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree at Oklahoma's Central State University and a Master's degree from Texas Women's University in nursing. After working for more than a dozen years as a full-time nurse in critical and intensive care, she went back to school and earned her medical degree with honors from the Texas Tech Health Science Center and completed her residency at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. Senator Campbell is a double board certified physicians in ophthalmology and emergency medicine. At the time of her election to the Texas Senate, she was the medical director at Columbus Community Hospital Emergency Department and worked full-time at a freestanding emergency room in Houston. She's a busy lady. Through her volunteer medical work with Christian Eye Ministries, Senator Campbell has performed hundreds of eye surgeries in the West African nation of Ghana. Senator Campbell also served as a precinct secretary in Lubbock, going on to become a full delegate for Texas in the 1986 Texas State Republican Convention. No stranger to hard work and discipline, please help me offer a warm welcome to Senator Donna S. Campbell.

Senator Donna S. Campbell: Good morning everybody! You know, isn't Texas a great place to live! Yes! And we've got to keep it that way! I did just come off a 72-hour work shift, left at 5:00 this morning. I think I – I hope there isn't any troopers in here. I think I kind of pushed the speed limit just a little bit in order to get here and thank you so much for inviting me. Dr. Shaw, thank you for inviting me to speak and your kind words of introduction. I also want to thank TCEQ and the hard working staff and our other commissioners, Carlos Rubinstein and Toby Baker. Thank you all very much. I'm not sure I've seen the mayor, yet, but you know he arranged all this, so we most certainly want to thank him. I want to recognize, obviously, my esteemed colleague in the Senate,

At the Central Tx Env. Summit with TCEQ Chairman Shaw and
Senator Donna Campbell

Leticia Van de Putte who was just given – we just nominated her for President Pro Tempore in the Senate, so that is a great thing and I want to give her a hand for that. You know, this meeting takes place and really close to the heart of my district and what more can be closer to any of our hearts when we love Texas than our natural resources, right? The Texas legislature is already knee-deep in water issues and I'm thinking that's my first time there, but I'm thinking by mid-session, we're going to be waist-deep because if really – if we're going to address the state's growing needs, when it comes to providing enough water to sustain us through drought conditions as well as meet our growing population, then there's really no point in just dipping our toe in it, right? We need to jump all in, correct? I hope you guys out there are willing to jump in it with me. I haven't found a Texan, yet, who's against water. And as a doc, it's pretty good because our body's about sixty-five percent water as adults. It's precious and I think we all know that. It's necessary for life. It's an economic investment that ensures our state remains beautiful. Businesses cannot move here to prosper unless we have water. Needless to say, our agricultural community can only continue to thrive if we provide them with water and jobs will not grow again without water. The importance of protecting flows of our rivers and streams – alright, can you tell I haven't had much sleep in 72 hours? The importance of protecting the flows of our rivers and streams can't be overstated. Water directly affects everything we are, we do, and can become. Protecting water means protecting Texas economy today and in our future.

You know, I was raised that if you borrow something, you return it quickly and you make sure that it's at least as good as when you borrowed it, if not better. What a perfect analogy with our natural resources and water, right? Whether it's, you know, trash, Texas bottling, you know, I met them over there a while ago. I'm not sure what that bill's going to be on my desk, but the point is stewardship. Water is the lifeblood of Texas and just like our nation was built around the waterways, rivers, streams when we started this new world, our state's success is dependent upon water, too. Being good stewards with our resources as well as our tax dollars is going to be vital to the health of Texas.

I want you to know that I am fully committed to finding funding and I'm sure Senator Van de Putte is, too, to find funding for investment of our water infrastructure. I support a one-time capital expenditure from our Economic Stabilization Fund for this infrastructure to ensure future prosperity. Let's work together in this session to find ways to invest in our state water plan. What good's a plan if we don't have funding, right? As you know, as he showed us, we're currently in – we're still in a drought and as a result of the drought conditions, nearly what, two-thirds of our 254 counties have been declared a primary natural disaster, right, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cattle have had to be moved out of the counties and agriculture has been affected. And I think the comptroller and others have estimated losses of around 7.6 billion in losses because of the drought.

I've spent the past months travelling the 35 corridor and through the counties that I represent and discussed water needs with both rate payers, those that, you know, all of us as individuals, as well as leaders in the community regarding water. It's important, especially when I visited with our senior legislators, the seniors in the Senate, our veterans, our seasoned veterans in the Senate, that water is going to be one of the top issues and it's not going to be something we just kick the can down the road, if you will,

At the Central Tx Env. Summit with TCEQ Chairman Shaw and
Senator Donna Campbell

a dry road. Everyone agrees we've got to come together in order to solve the vital issue of water. We've got to balance local concerns with the needs of high population growth in Texas, because it is such a wonderful state to live in, is going to continue to grow. We need certainty in permitting for planning. We need to take creative and innovative solutions as well as conservative measures in order to make sure that we've got water. No one expects this to be easy, but I'm ready to join all of you and others with an effort to solve this critical issue of our day.

You guys, thank you for giving me the opportunity. It's been my pleasure to get around to meet some of you. I haven't got the chance to meet all of you, but our office is accessible. Third floor; you got to meander up there, but third floor of the capital, we are definitely interested in helping you, helping Texas come up with ideas, so that we can have water and working with the other Senators. I'm excited for this session. Thank you very much. Bye-bye.

[end of recording]