



# Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

## Report on Customer Service

March 1, 2016 – February 28, 2018

### 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 B: 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](http://tceq.texas.gov/customersurvey)> for the English version and <[tceq.texas.gov/encuesta](http://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.

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 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 number of customers base their surveys (or specific survey questions) on older interactions.

### **Distribution Notes**

Our online distribution system allows anyone with internet access to submit a survey. This allows noncustomers to submit surveys, and it also allows people to submit duplicate surveys (i.e., surveys from the same customer within the same timeframe about the same subject). To improve the accuracy of our results, we do not accept duplicate and noncustomer surveys.

## **Processing**

When we receive a survey, we verify that it isn't a duplicate survey and that it came from one of our customers. Next, 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.

## Data

### **Received Surveys**

During this reporting period, we received 2,420 surveys— 792 hardcopy and 1,628 online. See Table 1: *Total Received Surveys*, for a comparison to the previous reporting period (March 1, 2014 through February 29, 2016).

*Table 1: Total Received Surveys*

	<b>Previous Period</b>	<b>This Period</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
<b>Total Hardcopy</b>	834	792	-5%
<b>Total Online</b>	1,401	1,628	+16%
<b>Total</b>	2,235	2,420	+8%

### **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 792 hardcopy surveys during this period; the current rate for mailing a one-ounce business-reply letter is \$0.57, so we estimate our postage cost at \$451.44. Our hardcopy survey also has an associated publication cost; during this period, we printed 6,000 surveys. The total publication cost was \$568.91, or about \$0.09 per survey. 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, we received 734 surveys (30% of the total surveys) without any contact information. 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, 2016 through February 28, 2018. 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*

<b>Survey reporting period</b>	March 1, 2016 – February 28, 2018
<b>Total number of surveys</b>	2,420
<b>Percentage of surveys rating overall satisfaction with the TCEQ</b>	81%
<b>Percentage of surveys identifying ways to improve our services</b>	3%
<b>Total estimated customers served</b>	28,801,338
<b>Total customers identified</b>	1,570
<b>Total customers surveyed</b>	Unknown
<b>Total customer groups inventoried</b>	8
<b>Average response time</b>	3 days

- **Total number of surveys:** We received 2,420 surveys from March 1, 2016 through February 28, 2018.
- **Percentage of surveys rating overall satisfaction with the TCEQ:** A total of 2,300 surveys provided a score for question four, how satisfied are you with the TCEQ. There were 1,865 surveys with a score of 4 or 5 (i.e., overall satisfied). This means that 81% of these surveys expressed overall satisfaction with the TCEQ, an increase of 1% compared to the last reporting period.
- **Percentage of surveys identifying ways to improve our services:** Out of the 2,420 surveys, 70 suggested an improvement which is 3% of the total surveys.
- **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 28,801,338 (based on the Texas Department of State Health Service’s population projections for 2016 through 2018).
- **Total customers identified:** From the 1,686 surveys submitted with contact information, we identified approximately 1,570 customers that took our survey; 99 of these customers submitted multiple surveys.
- **Total customers surveyed:** This value is unknown because we allow customers to submit surveys without entering any contact information. We received 734 surveys (30% of the total surveys) without any contact information.
- **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 174 surveys where customers needed assistance. The average time it took us to respond was three 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 categories with the lowest

percentages were *Neighborhood or Community Representative* and *Citizen*; however, each of these percentages are higher than the percentages in the previous biennial report. The customer category with 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 most of the highest percentages.

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	78%	62%	84%	91%	57%	88%	90%	81%	81%
Staff is sufficiently knowledgeable	84%	74%	90%	93%	76%	92%	94%	92%	88%
Staff is professional	89%	77%	93%	95%	83%	94%	96%	96%	90%
How we handle telephone calls or e-mail inquiries	86%	70%	95%	88%	71%	92%	92%	92%	86%
Timeliness of our response to customer complaints	89%	68%	86%	90%	77%	88%	91%	89%	84%
Accuracy and helpfulness of our written information	89%	66%	88%	87%	69%	89%	90%	86%	83%
Ease of finding information on our website	59%	60%	75%	70%	48%	68%	71%	64%	66%
Usefulness of information on our website	66%	63%	84%	85%	59%	79%	83%	76%	76%

### Descriptive Statistics

You can find the following information in [Appendix A: Survey Descriptive Statistics for March 1, 2016 – February 28, 2018](#):

- **Number of Surveys Received:** The number of surveys we received for each customer category.
  - **NOTE:** We accept 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 26 have a score for question eight (timeliness of our response to customer complaints).
- **Mean:** The average score.
- **Median:** It is the midpoint when all of the scores (1-5) are in order. If the median is five, it means that 50% or more of the surveys 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.

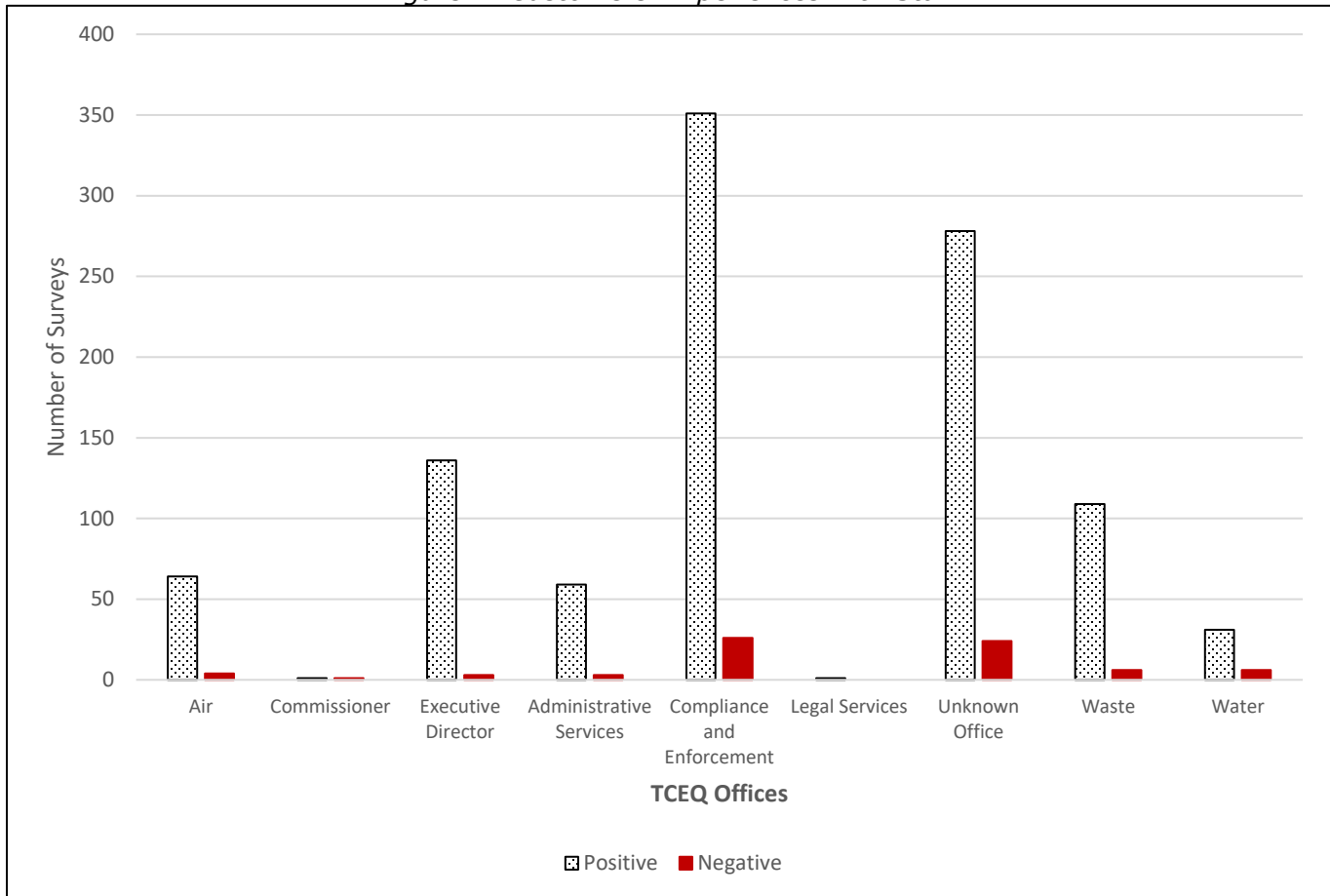
The appendix does not include confidence intervals for the mean (an interval containing the population mean, within a certain amount of confidence). This is because confidence intervals require random sampling, but our sample was not random (e.g., customers submitting multiple surveys). Since we only 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, 1,595 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, 93% 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 online services, including our website. From these comments, 79% of these customers had a negative experience.

## Opportunities for the Future

For this reporting period, 81% 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***

As mentioned in the subsection [Distribution Notes](#), we do not accept duplicate and noncustomer surveys. We will continue to focus on these efforts to further improve our survey data.

### ***Increasing Survey Data***

Early in this reporting period, we updated our icon and other survey graphics to improve the visibility of our online survey. Compared to the last reporting period, we received 16% more online surveys and 5% less hardcopy surveys; this may indicate an increase of online surveys because of these new graphics. We will continue to test other methods to motivate our 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; however, it is 3% higher than the previous reporting period's combined overall satisfaction score. In addition, 21% of our customers that commented about our online services indicated a positive experience which is 9% higher than the previous reporting period. In the next reporting period, we expect an increase to survey questions 10 and 11 (usefulness of information on our website) because we upgraded our website in September 2017, based on customer feedback. We plan to monitor surveys and continue forwarding any suggestions for improvements to our online services onto appropriate staff.

#### *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 four days after we received the survey; for this reporting period, it was three days. This decrease is partly due to our new, faster response procedures we used during the entire reporting period. We will continue to use our new response procedures when any surveyed customers need assistance.

#### *Phone Etiquette*

Compared to the previous reporting period, we received over twice as many comments regarding our phone etiquette (a total of 99 comments); 53% of these were positive comments which is a 13% increase from the previous reporting period. In addition, overall satisfaction for survey question 7 (how we handle telephone calls and e-mail inquiries) increased 2% from the previous reporting period. This service will be a focus in the next reporting period to determine methods for improving our phone etiquette and to adhere to our Compact with Texans commitment 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.”

## Appendix A: Survey Descriptive Statistics for March 1, 2016 – February 28, 2018

	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
<b>Number of Surveys Received</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2,420</b>
<i>Survey Questions</i>									
<b>Satisfied with the TCEQ</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>
	5, 5, 1.3	5, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 0.9	4, 5, 1.5	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.3
<b>Staff is sufficiently knowledgeable</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>
	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 1.5	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 1.3	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 1.1
<b>Staff is professional</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.6</b>
	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.4	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.7	5, 5, 1.3	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.7	5, 5, 0.7	5, 5, 1
<b>How we handle telephone calls or e-mail inquiries</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.4</b>
	5, 5, 1.3	5, 5, 1.6	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.4	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.8	5, 5, 1.2
<b>Timeliness of our response to customer complaints</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.3</b>
	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.5	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.3
<b>Accuracy and helpfulness of our written information</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>
	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.7	5, 5, 1.2	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.5	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 0.9	5, 5, 1.2
<b>Ease of finding information on our website</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.8</b>
	4, 5, 1.4	4, 5, 1.6	5, 5, 1.3	4, 5, 1.2	3, 5, 1.5	4, 5, 1.2	4, 5, 1.2	4, 5, 1.2	4, 5, 1.3
<b>Usefulness of information on our website</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>
	4, 5, 1.3	4, 5, 1.6	5, 5, 1.3	5, 5, 1	4, 5, 1.5	4, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 1	5, 5, 1.1	5, 5, 1.3

**KEY**

<b>Mean (average score)</b>
Median (middle score), Mode (most common score), Standard Deviation (variability)



# Appendix B: Customer Satisfaction Survey



**Texas Commission on Environmental Quality**  
**Comisión de Calidad Ambiental de Texas**

## Customer Satisfaction Survey Encuesta de Satisfacción del Cliente

- Please identify yourself: (mark only one) *Favor de identificarse: (marque sólo una)*
  - Citizen *Ciudadano*
  - Environmental Group Representative  
*Representante de grupo ambiental*
  - Industry/Association Representative  
*Representante de industria/asociación*
  - Owner/Employee of Regulated Company  
*Dueño/empleado de una compañía regulada*
  - Public/Elected Official  
*Funcionario público/elegido*
  - Attorney/Consultant *Abogado/asesor*
  - Neighborhood/Community Representative  
*Representante comunitario/de vecindad*
  - Other (please describe) *Otro (favor de describir)*
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)*
  - General Information  
*Información general*
  - Problem Resolution  
*Resolución de problemas*
  - Technical Assistance *Ayuda técnica*
  - Other (please describe)  
*Otro (favor de describir)*
  - Permitting/Licensing Assistance  
*Ayuda con permiso/licencia*
  - Investigation/Inspection  
*Investigación/Inspección*

**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<br><i>Con la Comisión de Calidad Ambiental de Texas</i>   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | N/A |
| 5. That our staff is sufficiently knowledgeable<br><i>Que nuestro personal está suficientemente informado</i>   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | N/A |
| 6. That our staff is professional<br><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<br><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<br><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<br><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<br><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<br><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)<br><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.texas.gov/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.texas.gov/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.

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