



## SYLVIA R. GARCIA

STATE SENATOR  
DISTRICT 6

September 12, 2018

Chairman Jon Niermann  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 13087  
Austin, Texas 78711

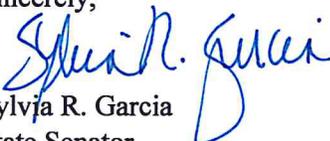
Dear Chairman Niermann,

I would like to welcome you to your new role as the Chairman of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The purpose of this letter is to provide comments on the Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust and request an update from your office that includes a timeline for grant submission.

Of the \$2.9 billion federal settlement with Volkswagen over fabricated emissions claims, your agency is responsible for the administration of \$209 million that is allocated to the State of Texas. According to TCEQ's Draft Beneficiary Mitigation Plan, the majority of the pollution mitigation money--\$170 million--will be released to the five priority areas of Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, San Antonio, El Paso County, and Beaumont-Port Arthur. While these regions were designated as high ozone concentration areas and will be eligible to apply for funding for mitigation projects through grant applications, the proposed funding distribution allocates almost 50% of available funds to the San Antonio and Dallas-Fort Worth areas. While all communities within Texas could benefit from this funding, the proposed allocations disregard the high cost of alleviating elevated emission levels within port cities and along the Texas coast. In addition, the potential to utilize a portion of this funding for Hurricane Harvey recovery, specifically in replacing destroyed vehicles, seems to have been overlooked.

Finally, while it is critical to gain as much community input as possible, I urge you to hold an additional public meeting more accessible to people directly impacted who live in and around the Houston Ship Channel and the petrochemical complex, both in my District. I appreciate your consideration of my comments and if I can be of any assistance as you transition into your new role at TCEQ, please do not hesitate to contact me either by phone at 713-453-5100 or by email at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

  
Sylvia R. Garcia  
State Senator

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