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October 3, 2018

The Honorable Jon Niermann
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box
Austin, TX 78711-3087

Dear Chairman Niermann,

On behalf of our Chair, Erika Prosper Nirenberg, our board, and our more than 1,200 members that are part of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, we support the proposed draft plan by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Beneficiary Mitigation Plan for Texas that resulted from litigation of the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust.

For more than 89 years, the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has served as a leading source and advocate for Hispanic businesses, Hispanics in business, and the Hispanic market. We were the first Hispanic Chamber in the United States starting in 1929. Because of our longstanding legacy, we understand the importance we play in the advocacy not only of our members but for San Antonio and our region.

Most recently, the San Antonio area was officially listed as “nonattainment” by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the 2015 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). This designation of “nonattainment” triggers regulation and compliance in the area to reduce the level of ozone in the area for the next two years in spite of local and regional measures, we as a community have taken active steps to reduce our regional ozone.

The Beneficiary Mitigation Plan presented by TCEQ provides additional avenues for the San Antonio area to reduce our nonattainment with a classification of marginal. We are pleased to see 35.14% of total funds allocated to the state through the Trust will be implemented in the San Antonio area to reduce NOx emissions, reduce the potential for exposure of the public to pollutants, and increase the use of zero emission vehicles. With 17 independent school districts in the San Antonio area, many have older school bus fleets they are unable to modernize due to funding priorities. Grants and programs such as the ones stated in the proposal are a start for these school districts to improve.

We are look forward to reviewing the final proposal and the implementation of the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust in our community.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Quintanilla Cedillo
Interim President & CEO
San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

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