The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ, agency, or commission) proposes to amend §285.10.

**Background and Summary of the Factual Basis for the Proposed Rule**

The proposed rulemaking is intended to update one of the commission’s procedural rules and is not intended to impose any new procedural or substantive requirements.

In 1999, the 76th Texas Legislature enacted House Bill (HB) 801, which revised public participation in environmental permitting for certain permit applications declared administratively complete on or after September 1, 1999. The rulemaking to implement HB 801 (and other bills) consolidated the public participation rules across the agency which have subsequently been amended to implement legislation and policy decisions of the commission. The commission necessarily retained procedural rules applicable to certain permit applications declared administratively complete before September 1, 1999, and to other actions of the commission.

On June 12, 2019, the commission determined that the rules in 30 TAC Chapter 39, Subchapters A – E; Chapter 50, Subchapters A – C; Chapter 55, Subchapters A and B; and Chapter 80, §§80.3, 80.5, and 80.251 are obsolete and no longer needed because no applications that were declared administratively complete before September 1, 1999 and thus subject to these rules remain pending with the commission (June 28, 2019, issue of the *Texas Register* (44 TexReg 3304)). As a result, the commission is
proposing, in a concurrent rulemaking, to repeal obsolete rules in Chapters 39, 50, 55, and 80 (Rule Project Number 2019-119-039-LS) which then necessitates updating other rules, primarily to remove obsolete text and update cross-references.

As part of this rulemaking, the commission is concurrently proposing amendments in 30 TAC Chapters 33, 35, 39, 50, 55, 60, 70, 80, 90, 205, 294, 305, 321, 330 - 332, 334, 335, and 350, and new sections in Chapter 39, to make necessary changes due to the proposed repeals. In addition, this rulemaking addresses public notice requirements for certain applications that are not subject to contested case hearing but are currently subject to rules in Chapter 39, Subchapters A and B, without regard to the specified date of administrative completeness. The public notice requirements for those applications would be relocated to proposed new Chapter 39, Subchapter P. Section 285.10 is proposed to be amended by updating an obsolete cross-reference.

The commission is also concurrently proposing amendments to 30 TAC Chapters 39, 55, 101, and 116 to make necessary changes due to the proposed repeals for which revisions to the State Implementation Plan are also necessary (Rule Project Number 2019-120-039-LS).

The public’s opportunity to participate in the permitting process will not change nor be affected in any way as a result of these rulemaking projects.
Section Discussion

The commission proposes to make stylistic, non-substantive changes, such as, grammatical corrections. These changes are non-substantive and generally are not specifically discussed in this preamble.

§285.10, Delegation to Authorized Agents

The commission proposes to amend §285.10(b)(9) to update the cross-reference from §50.39, which is concurrently proposed for repeal, to §50.139 (Motion to Overturn Executive Director’s Decision).

Fiscal Note: Costs to State and Local Government

Jené Bearse, Analyst in the Budget and Planning Division, determined that for the first five-year period the proposed rulemaking is in effect, no fiscal implications are anticipated for the agency or for other units of state or local government as a result of administration or enforcement of the proposed rule.

This rulemaking, concurrently proposed with amendments in various other chapters to address necessary rule updates, will update a cross-reference.

Public Benefits and Costs

Ms. Bearse determined that for each year of the first five years the proposed rulemaking is in effect, the public benefit anticipated will be improved readability and
minimized confusion with regard to applicable rules. The rulemaking does not remove or add any current requirements regarding public participation for certain types of permit applications. The proposed amendment is not anticipated to result in fiscal implications for businesses or individuals.

**Local Employment Impact Statement**

The commission reviewed this proposed rulemaking and determined that a Local Employment Impact Statement is not required because the proposed rulemaking does not adversely affect a local economy in a material way for the first five years that the proposed rule is in effect.

**Rural Community Impact Statement**

The commission reviewed this proposed rulemaking and determined that the proposed rulemaking does not adversely affect rural communities in a material way for the first five years that the proposed rulemaking is in effect. The rulemaking applies state-wide to all applicants for certain types of permit applications and the public and communities interested in those applications. The change will improve readability and minimize confusion with regard to applicable rules.

**Small Business and Micro-Business Assessment**

No adverse fiscal implications are anticipated for small or micro-businesses due to the implementation or administration of the proposed rulemaking for the first five-year
period the proposed rule is in effect. This rulemaking addresses the removal of an obsolete cross-reference.

**Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Analysis**

The commission reviewed this proposed rulemaking and determined that a Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required because the proposed rulemaking does not adversely affect a small or micro-business in a material way for the first five years the proposed rulemaking is in effect.

**Government Growth Impact Statement**

The commission prepared a Government Growth Impact Statement Assessment for this proposed rulemaking. The proposed rulemaking does not create or eliminate a government program and will not require an increase or decrease in future legislative appropriations to the agency. The proposed rulemaking does not require the creation of new employee positions, eliminate current employee positions, nor require an increase or decrease in fees paid to the agency. The proposed rulemaking does not create, expand, repeal, or limit an existing regulation, nor does it increase or decrease the number of individuals subject to its applicability. During the first five years, the proposed rule should not impact positively or negatively the state's economy.

**Draft Regulatory Impact Analysis Determination**

The commission reviewed the rulemaking action in light of the regulatory analysis
requirements of Texas Government Code, §2001.0225, and determined that the action is not subject to Texas Government Code, §2001.0225, because it does not meet the definition of a "Major environmental rule" as defined in that statute. A "Major environmental rule" is a rule the specific intent of which is to protect the environment or reduce risks to human health from environmental exposure, and that may adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, or the public health and safety of the state or a sector of the state. The proposed amendment of §285.10 is procedural in nature and is not specifically intended to protect the environment or reduce risks to human health from environmental exposure, nor does it affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, or the public health and safety of the state or a sector of the state. Rather, this rulemaking updates a cross-reference to ensure there is no confusion regarding the applicable rules for public participation for certain permit applications.

Texas Government Code, §2001.0225, applies to a major environmental rule, the result of which is to: exceed a standard set by federal law, unless the rule is specifically required by state law; exceed an express requirement of state law, unless the rule is specifically required by federal law; exceed a requirement of a delegation agreement or contract between the state and an agency or representative of the federal government to implement a state and federal program; or adopt a rule solely under the general authority of the commission. The proposed amendment of §285.10 does not exceed an
express requirement of state law or a requirement of a delegation agreement and was not developed solely under the general powers of the agency but is authorized by specific sections of the Texas Government Code and the Texas Water Code that are cited in the statutory authority section of this preamble. Therefore, this rulemaking is not subject to the regulatory analysis provisions of Texas Government Code, §2001.0225(b).

Written comments on the Draft Regulatory Impact Analysis Determination may be submitted to the contact person at the address listed under the Submittal of Comments section of this preamble.

**Takings Impact Assessment**

The commission evaluated the proposed rulemaking and performed an analysis of whether Texas Government Code, Chapter 2007, is applicable. The proposed amendment of §285.10 does not affect private property in a manner that restricts or limits an owner's right to the property that would otherwise exist in the absence of a governmental action. Consequently, this rulemaking action does not meet the definition of a taking under Texas Government Code, §2007.002(5). The proposed amendment does not directly prevent a nuisance or prevent an immediate threat to life or property. Therefore, this rulemaking action will not constitute a taking under Texas Government Code, Chapter 2007.
Consistency with the Coastal Management Program

The commission reviewed the proposed rulemaking and found the proposal is a rulemaking identified in the Coastal Coordination Act implementation rules, 31 TAC §505.11(b)(4) relating to rules subject to the Coastal Management Program (CMP), and will, therefore, require that goals and policies of the CMP be considered during the rulemaking process.

The commission reviewed this rulemaking for consistency with the CMP goals and policies in accordance with the regulations of the Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee and determined that the rulemaking is procedural in nature and will have no substantive effect on commission actions subject to the CMP and is, therefore, consistent with CMP goals and policies.

Written comments on the consistency of this rulemaking with CMP goals and policies may be submitted to the contact person at the address listed under the Submittal of Comments section of this preamble.

Effect on Sites Subject to the Federal Operating Permits Program

Section 285.10 is not an applicable requirement under 30 TAC Chapter 122 (Federal Operating Permits Program) and, therefore, no effect on sites subject to the Federal Operating Permits program is expected if the commission amends this rule.
Announcement of Hearing

The commission will hold a public hearing on this proposal in Austin on December 10, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. in Building E, Room 201S, at the commission’s central office located at 12100 Park 35 Circle. The hearing is structured for the receipt of oral or written comments by interested persons. Individuals may present oral statements when called upon in order of registration. Open discussion will not be permitted during the hearing; however, commission staff members will be available to discuss the proposal 30 minutes prior to the hearing.

Persons who have special communication or other accommodation needs who are planning to attend the hearing should contact Sandy Wong, Office of Legal Services at (512) 239-1802 or 1-800-RELAY-TX (TDD). Requests should be made as far in advance as possible.

Submittal of Comments

Written comments may be submitted to Paige Bond, MC 205, Office of Legal Services, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087, or faxed to (512) 239-4808. Electronic comments may be submitted at: https://www6.tceq.texas.gov/rules/ecomments/. File size restrictions may apply to comments being submitted via the eComments system. All comments should reference Rule Project Number 2019-121-033-LS. The comment period closes on December 16, 2019. Copies of the proposed rulemaking can be obtained from the commission’s
website at https://www.tceq.texas.gov/rules/proposal_adopt.html. For further information, please contact Amy Browning, Environmental Law Division, at (512) 239-0891.
SUBCHAPTER A: GENERAL PROVISIONS

§285.10

Statutory Authority
The amendment is proposed under Texas Water Code (TWC), Chapter 5, Subchapter M; TWC, §5.013, which establishes the general jurisdiction of the commission; TWC, §5.102, which provides the commission with the authority to carry out its duties and general powers under its jurisdictional authority as provided by the TWC; TWC, §5.103, which requires the commission to adopt any rule necessary to carry out its powers and duties under the TWC and other laws of the state; TWC, §5.122, which authorizes the commission to delegate uncontested matters to the executive director; and TWC, §26.011, which authorizes the commission to maintain the quality of water in the state of Texas. The amendment is also proposed under Texas Health and Safety Code (THSC), §366.012, which authorizes the commission to adopt rules to administer the regulation of on-site sewage disposal systems, and Texas Government Code, §2001.004, which requires state agencies to adopt procedural rules.

The rulemaking implements TWC, Chapter 5, Subchapter M; TWC, §§5.013, 5.102, 5.103, 5.122, and 26.011; and THSC, Chapter 366.

§285.10. Delegation to Authorized Agents.
(a) Responsibility of the authorized agent. An authorized agent is responsible for the proper implementation of this chapter in its area of jurisdiction.

(1) An authorized agent shall administer its on-site sewage facility (OSSF) program according to the OSSF order, ordinance, or resolution approved by the executive director.

(2) An authorized agent shall enforce this chapter and Texas Health and Safety Code (THSC), Chapter 366.

(b) Requirements and procedures.

(1) Upon request from a local governmental entity, the executive director shall forward a description of the delegation process and provide a copy of the executive director's model order, ordinance, or resolution.

(2) If the OSSF program is delegated to a municipality, the jurisdiction of the authorized agent will be limited to the municipality's incorporated area.

(3) To receive delegation as an authorized agent, a local governmental entity shall draft an order, ordinance, or resolution that meets the requirements of this
chapter and THSC, §366.032. The local governmental entity shall use the model order, ordinance, or resolution as a guide for developing its order, ordinance, or resolution.

(4) If the local governmental entity proposes more stringent standards than those in this chapter, the local governmental entity shall submit the proposed order, ordinance, or resolution to the executive director for review and comment before publishing notice.

(A) Each more stringent requirement shall be justified based on greater public health and safety protection. The written justification shall be submitted to the executive director with the draft order, ordinance, or resolution.

(B) The executive director shall review the draft order, ordinance, or resolution and provide written comments to the local governmental entity within 30 days of receipt.

(C) If the local governmental entity's draft order, ordinance, or resolution meets the requirements of this chapter, the executive director will notify the local governmental entity in writing to continue the process outlined in this subsection.
(D) If the local governmental entity’s draft order, ordinance, or resolution does not meet the requirements of this chapter, the executive director will not continue the review process until all requirements have been met. The executive director will notify the local governmental entity in writing of all deficiencies.

(5) If the local governmental entity proposes using the model order, ordinance, or resolution without more stringent standards, or if the executive director has approved the draft order, ordinance, or resolution with more stringent standards, the local governmental entity shall hold a public meeting to discuss the proposed order, ordinance, or resolution.

(A) The local governmental entity shall publish notice of a public meeting that will be held to discuss the adoption of the proposed order, ordinance, or resolution. The notice must be published in a regularly published newspaper of general circulation in the entity's area of jurisdiction.

(B) The public notice shall include the time, date, and location of the public meeting.

(C) The public notice shall be published at least 72 hours before the public meeting, but not more than 30 days before the meeting.
(6) The local governmental entity shall provide the executive director with the following:

(A) a copy of the public notice as it appeared in the newspaper;

(B) a publisher’s affidavit from the newspaper in which the public notice was published;

(C) a certified copy of the minutes of the meeting when the order, ordinance, or resolution was adopted; and

(D) a certified copy of the order, ordinance, or resolution that was passed by the entity.

(7) Upon receiving the information listed in paragraph (6) of this subsection, the executive director shall have 30 days to review the materials to ensure the local governmental entity has complied with the requirements of this chapter and THSC, Chapter 366.

(A) After the review has been completed and all the requirements have been met, the executive director shall sign the order approving delegation and notify the local governmental entity by mail.
(B) If the executive director determines during the review that the materials do not comply with the requirements of this section, the executive director will issue a letter to the local governmental entity detailing the deficiencies.

(8) The local governmental entity’s order, ordinance, or resolution shall be effective on the date the order approving delegation is signed by the executive director.

(9) Any appeal of the executive director's decision shall be done according to §50.139 [§50.39] of this title (relating to Motion to Overturn Executive Director's Decision [for Reconsideration]).

(c) Amendments to existing orders, ordinances, or resolutions.

(1) To ensure that the authorized agent’s program is consistent with current commission rules, the executive director may require periodic amendments of OSSF orders, ordinances, or resolutions.

(2) An authorized agent may initiate an amendment. The authorized agent shall use the procedures in subsection (b) of this section.
(3) The amendment shall be effective on the date the amendment is approved by the executive director.

(d) Relinquishment of delegated authority by authorized agent.

(1) When an authorized agent decides to relinquish authority to regulate OSSFs, the following shall occur:

(A) the authorized agent shall inform the executive director by certified mail at least 30 days before publishing notice of intent to relinquish authority;

(B) the authorized agent shall hold a public meeting to discuss its intent to relinquish the delegated authority;

(i) the authorized agent shall publish notice of a public meeting that will be held to discuss its intent to relinquish the delegated authority. The notice must be published in a regularly published newspaper of general circulation in the entity’s area of jurisdiction;

(ii) the public notice shall include the time, date, and location of the public meeting;
(iii) the public notice shall be published at least 72 hours before the public meeting, but not more than 30 days before the meeting;

(C) the authorized agent must, either at the meeting discussed in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, or at another meeting held within 30 days after the first meeting, formally decide whether to repeal the order, ordinance, or resolution; and

(D) the authorized agent shall forward to the executive director copies of the public notice, a publisher's affidavit of public notice, and a certified copy of the minutes of the meeting in which the authorized agent formally acted.

(2) Before the executive director will process a relinquishment order, the authorized agent and the executive director shall determine the exact date the authorized agent shall surrender its delegated authority. Until that date, the authorized agent will retain all authority and responsibility for the delegated program.

(3) The executive director shall process the request for relinquishment within 30 days of receipt of the copies of documentation required in paragraph (1)(D) of this subsection. After processing the request for relinquishment, the executive director will issue an order and shall assume responsibility for the OSSF program.
(4) On or after the date determined by the authorized agent and the executive director, the authorized agent shall repeal its order, ordinance, or resolution. Within ten days after the authorized agent repeals its order, ordinance, or resolution, the authorized agent shall forward a certified copy of the repeal to the executive director.

(5) Authorized agents who relinquish their OSSF authority may be subject to fees according to §285.14 of this title (relating to Charge-back Fee) after the date that delegation has been relinquished, unless the authorized agent has relinquished its OSSF authority due to a material change in this chapter.