

TCEQ Analysis of TCEQ Contractor Surface Water Quality Sampling Data Collected on March 28, 2019 (Final lab results)

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) received final surface water quality data for 129 constituents at two (2) different sites. One sample was collected at each site on March 28, 2019 by the TCEQ's contractor. The constituents consist of inorganics, organics, metals, nutrients, chemical oxygen demand (COD), carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand (CBOD), total suspended solids, and oil and grease in water. The sampling sites were the following:

- Mouth of Tucker @ Buffalo Bayou
- Upstream Tucker

This assessment is based on final results received from the laboratory. As additional water quality sampling is completed, the data will be assessed, and results made available.

The TCEQ used the Texas Water Quality Standards and the Texas Risk Reduction Program as references for determining the known health protective concentration levels (PCLs) in surface water. PCLs are very conservative and below levels where we would expect any health impacts. The TCEQ is using these PCLs to evaluate impacts to aquatic life and human health. No public drinking water system draws its source water from the Houston Ship Channel. This methodology was also used for previously reviewed data from samples collected by ITC and will be used to review samples from the TCEQ contractor. The TCEQ used the PCLs listed in the tables below to assess the surface water quality data.

Table 1: Assessment of Final Laboratory Results

	Mouth of Tucker @ Buffalo Bayou	Upstream Tucker
Number of Constituents	129	129*
Number of constituents analyzed but not detected (not detected above the method detection limit or quantitation limit)	107	110
Number of constituents detected above the method detection limit or quantitation limit	22	7
Number of constituents detected but below their known PCLs	6	3
Number of constituents that exceeded their known PCLs	7	2
Number of constituents that are still pending further TCEQ evaluation	0	0
Number of constituents that do not have a PCL or are assessed with other constituents**	9	2

*12 constituents: 1,2-Dichlorobenzene, 1,3-Dichlorobenzene, 2-Chloronaphthalene, 3-Nitroaniline, 4-Nitroaniline, 4-Nitrophenol, Benzidine, Benzyl Alcohol, Hexachlorocyclopentadiene, Isophorone, Nitrogen Ammonia (as N) and Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen, collected at the Upstream Tucker Bayou site included a sample where the MS/MSD recovery were found to be outside of the laboratory control limit due to possible matrix/chemical interference, or a concentration of target analyte high enough to affect the recovery of the spike concentration. This condition could also affect the relative percent difference in the MS/MSD. Therefore, these were excluded from the assessment of preliminary laboratory results.

**The water quality parameters ammonia nitrogen (as N), total Kjeldahl nitrogen, total phosphate, total organic nitrogen, total sulfides, and total suspended solids are not related to human health; therefore it is not appropriate to develop human health comparison values to evaluate these parameters. Three chemicals on the laboratory target analyte list (4-bromophenyl phenyl ether, 4-chlorophenyl phenyl ether, and benzo(g,h,i)perylene) do not have surface water comparison values and consequently will not be evaluated. These water quality parameters and chemicals are not directly related to the ITC incident, and the TCEQ is evaluating the chemicals that are directly related to the ITC incident (benzene and toluene, for example). C6-12, C12-28 and C28-35 range hydrocarbons, as well as total petroleum hydrocarbons, are included in the assessment of oil and grease. Therefore, these constituents are not assessed individually.

Table 2: Mouth of Tucker Bayou @ Buffalo Bayou

Constituent	Maximum (micrograms/L)	PCL (micrograms/L)
Phenolic	46.5	0.29
COD	890000	150000*
CBOD	168000	39500**
Benzene	1370	581
Zinc	163	84.2
Copper	5.09	3.6
2-Methylnaphthalene	36.1	30

Table 3: Upstream Tucker

Constituent	Maximum (micrograms/L)	PCL (micrograms/L)
Phenolic	16.4	0.29
Copper	4.62	3.6

Footnote:

*COD is a measure of the oxygen demand exerted by chemical constituents in water. There was not a known PCL for COD, therefore the permitted technology-based limit was used for comparison purposes. Although COD levels for treated process wastewater vary 150000 micrograms/L for noncontact stormwater was provided for comparison purposes.

**CBOD is an organic pollution indicator that measures the oxygen demand exerted by the microbial decomposition of carbonaceous organic material in water (microbial breakdown of nitrogenous constituents is suppressed). There is not a known PCL for CBOD, therefore the permitted technology-based limit for treated process water of 39500 micrograms/L was used for comparison purposes.