# TCEQ AIR QUALITY PERMIT NUMBERS 166032, GHGPSDTX210, and PSDTX1598 TCEQ DOCKET NUMBER 2023-0164-AIR

APPLICATION BY	§	<b>BEFORE THE TEXAS</b>
ENTERGY TEXAS, INC.	§	COMMISSION ON

ORANGE COUNTY ADVANCED §
POWER STATION § ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

ORANGE, ORANGE COUNTY

# **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO HEARING REQUESTS**

# I. INTRODUCTION

The Executive Director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (commission or TCEQ) files this response (Response) to the requests for a contested case hearing submitted by persons listed herein regarding the above-referenced matter. The Texas Clean Air Act (TCAA), Texas Health & Safety Code (THSC) § 382.056(n), requires the commission to consider hearing requests in accordance with the procedures provided in Tex. Water Code (TWC) § 5.556. This statute is implemented through the rules in 30 Tex. Admin. Code (TAC) Chapter 55, Subchapter F.

A map showing the location of the proposed plant is included with this Response and has been provided to all hearing requesters listed on the mailing list for this application. In addition, the final draft of the special conditions, the emission sources – maximum allowable emission rates, the air quality analysis modeling audit (containing the health effects review), the compliance history report, and the construction permit source analysis and technical review by the Executive Director's staff have been filed as backup material for the commissioners' agenda. The Executive Director's Response to Public Comment (RTC), which was mailed by the chief clerk to all persons on the mailing list, is on file with the chief clerk for the commission's consideration.

#### II. PLANT DESCRIPTION

Entergy Texas, Inc. (Entergy or Applicant) has applied to the TCEQ for a New Source Review Authorization under Texas Clean Air Act (TCAA) § 382.0518. This will authorize the construction of a new facility that may emit air contaminants.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Statutes cited in this response may be viewed online at www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us. Relevant statutes are found primarily in the thsc and the twc. The rules in the TAC may be viewed online at www.sos.state.tx.us/tac/index.shtml, or follow the "Rules" link on the TCEQ website at www.tceq.texas.gov.

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This permit, if issued, will authorize the Applicant to construct the Orange County Advanced Power Station. The plant is to be located at 1000 Power House Road, Orange, Orange County, Texas 77630. Contaminants authorized under this permit include carbon monoxide (CO), organic compounds, particulate matter including particulate matter with diameters of 10 microns or less and 2.5 microns or less ( $PM_{10}$  and  $PM_{2.5}$ , respectively), sulfuric acid mist, greenhouse gases ( $PM_{10}$  introgen oxides ( $PM_{10}$ ), hazardous air pollutants ( $PM_{10}$ ), sulfur dioxide ( $PM_{10}$ ), aqueous ammonia ( $PM_{10}$ ), and hydrogen ( $PM_{10}$ ).

#### III. PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

Before work is begun on the construction of a new facility that may emit air contaminants, the person planning the construction must obtain a permit from the commission. This permit application is for an initial issuance of Air Quality Permit Numbers 166032, GHGPSDTX210, and PSDTX1598.

The permit application was received on July 29, 2021 and declared administratively complete on August 04, 2021. The Notice of Receipt and Intent to Obtain an Air Quality Permit (first public notice) for this permit application was published in English on August 14, 2021, in the *Orange Leader*, and in Spanish on August 15, 2021 in *El Perico*. The Notice of Application and Preliminary Decision for an Air Quality Permit (second public notice) was published on June 29, 2022, in English in the *Orange Leader* and in Spanish on June 29, 2022, in *El Perico*. A public meeting was held on August 1, 2022 at Lamar State College Orange, Student Center, 407 Green Avenue, Orange, Texas 77630. The notice of public meeting was mailed to persons on the mailing list on July 1, 2022. The public comment period ended on August 1, 2022. Because this application was received after September 1, 2015, it is subject to the procedural requirements of and rules implementing Senate Bill 709 (84th Legislature, 2015).

The Sierra Club submitted a hearing request on behalf of itself, Environmental Integrity Project, Air Alliance Houston, Environment Texas, Clean Energy Fund of Texas, Inc., Texas Campaign for the Environment, and Port Arthur Community Action Network (collectively, Sierra Club). In addition to this submission, Sierra Club also submitted a hearing request on behalf of 465 members in the Orange County area. All these requests failed to list an address. These requests only included a name, city, state, and zip code. One of the submitted requests was for Ms. Ellen Buchanan. After Sierra Club submitted these requests, Ms. Buchanan submitted her name and address personally.

The Executive Director's RTC was filed with the Chief Clerk's Office on November 29, 2022 and mailed to all interested persons on December 6, 2022, including to those who asked to be placed on the mailing list for this application and those who submitted comments or requests for a contested case hearing. The cover letter attached to the RTC included information about making requests for a contested case hearing or for reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision. The letter also explained that hearing requestors should specify any of the Executive Director's responses to comments they dispute and the factual basis of the dispute, in addition to listing any disputed issues of law or policy. The time for requests for reconsideration and hearing requests ended on January 5, 2022. During this 30-day period, the TCEQ did not receive any additional contested case hearing requests or requests for reconsideration.

#### IV. THE EVALUATION PROCESS FOR HEARING REQUESTS

House Bill 801 established statutory procedures for public participation in certain environmental permitting proceedings, specifically regarding public notice and public comment and the commission's consideration of hearing requests. Senate Bill 709 revised the requirements for submitting public comment and the commission's consideration of hearing requests. The evaluation process for hearing requests is as follows:

## A. Response to Requests

The Executive Director, the Public Interest Counsel, and the Applicant may each submit written responses to hearing requests. 30 TAC § 55.209(d).

Responses to hearing requests must specifically address:

- 1) whether the requestor is an affected person;
- 2) which issues raised in the hearing request are disputed;
- 3) whether the dispute involves questions of fact or of law;
- 4) whether the issues were raised during the public comment period;
- whether the hearing request is based on issues raised solely in a public comment withdrawn by the commenter in writing by filing a withdrawal letter with the chief clerk prior to the filing of the Executive Director's Response to Comment;
- 6) whether the issues are relevant and material to the decision on the application; and
- 7) a maximum expected duration for the contested case hearing.

30 TAC § 55.209(e).

# **B.** Hearing Request Requirements

In order for the commission to consider a hearing request, the commission must first determine whether the request meets certain requirements:

Affected persons may request a contested case hearing. The request must be made in writing and timely filed with the chief clerk. The request must be based only on the requestor's timely comments and may not be based on an issue that was raised solely in a public comment that was withdrawn by the requestor prior to the filing of the Executive Director's Response to Comment.

30 TAC § 55.201(c).

A hearing request must substantially comply with the following:

- give the name, address, daytime telephone number, and where possible, fax number of the person who files the request. If the request is made by a group or association, the request must identify one person by name, address, daytime telephone number, and where possible, fax number, who shall be responsible for receiving all official communications and documents for the group;
- 2) identify the person's personal justiciable interest affected by the application, including a brief, but specific, written statement explaining in plain language the requestor's location and distance relative to the proposed facility or activity that is the subject of the application and how and why the requestor believes he or she will be adversely affected by the proposed facility or activity in a manner not common to members of the general public;
- 3) request a contested case hearing;
- during the public comment period and that are the basis of the hearing request. To facilitate the commission's determination of the number and scope of issues to be referred to hearing, the requestor should, to the extent possible, specify any of the Executive Director's responses to comments that the requestor disputes and the factual basis of the dispute and list any disputed issues of law; and
- 5) provide any other information specified in the public notice of application.

30 TAC § 55.201(d).

#### C. Requirement that Requestor be an Affected Person/"Affected Person" Status

In order to grant a contested case hearing, the commission must determine that a requestor is an "affected" person. Section 55.203 sets out who may be considered an affected person.

- a) For any application, an affected person is one who has a personal justiciable interest related to a legal right, duty, privilege, power, or economic interest affected by the application. An interest common to members of the general public does not quality as a personal justiciable interest.
- b) Except as provided by 30 TAC § 55.103, governmental entities, including local governments and public agencies with authority under state law over issues raised by the application may be considered affected persons.
- c) In determining whether a person is an affected person, all factors shall be considered, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - 1) whether the interest claimed is one protected by the law under which the application will be considered;

- 2) distance restrictions or other limitations imposed by law on the affected interest;
- 3) whether a reasonable relationship exists between the interest claimed and the activity regulated;
- 4) likely impact of the regulated activity on the health and safety of the person, and on the use of property of the person;
- 5) likely impact of the regulated activity on use of the impacted natural resource by the person;
- for a hearing request on an application filed on or after September 1, 2015, whether the requestor timely submitted comments on the application which were not withdrawn; and
- 7) for governmental entities, their statutory authority over or interest in the issues relevant to the application.

## 30 TAC § 55.203.

In regard specifically to air quality permits, the activity the commission regulates is the emissions of air contaminants into the atmosphere. Any person who plans to construct or modify a facility that may emit air contaminants must receive authorization from the commission. Commission rules also include a general prohibition against causing a nuisance. Further, for air quality permits, distance from the proposed facility is particularly relevant to the issue of whether there is a likely impact of the regulated activity on a person's interests because of the dispersion and effects of individual air contaminants emitted from a facility.

Additionally, this application is for registration for the Standard Permit for Concrete Batch Plants. Hearing requests on a concrete batch plant standard permit are subject to the requirements in TCAA § 382.058(c), which states that "only those persons actually residing in a permanent residence within 440 yards of the proposed plant may request a hearing…as a person who may be affected."

For applications filed on or after September 1, 2015, 30 TAC § 55.201(d) allows the commission to consider, to the extent consistent with case law:

- 1) the merits of the underlying application and supporting documentation in the commission's administrative record, including whether the application meets the requirements for permit issuance;
- 2) the analysis and opinions of the Executive Director; and
- 3) any other expert reports, affidavits, opinions, or data submitted by the Executive Director, the applicant, or hearing requestor.

# D. Referral to the State Office of Administrative Hearings

"When the commission grants a request for a contested case hearing, the commission shall issue an order specifying the number and scope of the issues to be referred to SOAH for a hearing." 30 TAC § 50.115(b). The commission may not refer an issue to SOAH for a contested case hearing unless the commission determines that the issue:

- 1) involves a disputed question of fact or a mixed question of law and fact;
- 2) was raised during the public comment period by an affected person whose hearing request is granted; and
- 3) is relevant and material to the decision on the application.

30 TAC § 50.115(c).

# V. ANALYSIS OF THE HEARING REQUESTS

The Executive Director has analyzed the hearing requests to determine whether they comply with commission rules, if the requestors qualify as affected persons, what issues may be referred for a contested case hearing, and what is the appropriate length of the hearing.

# A. Individual Requestors

# 1. Individuals that did not meet the requirements of 30 TAC § 55.201

The Executive Director reviewed the factors found in 30 TAC § 55.201(c) and (d), and § 55.203 for determining whether a requestor is an affected person, and recommends the commission find that the persons listed in Attachment A are not affected persons.

The requestors listed in Attachment A each submitted a hearing request as part of a timely filed comment. The hearing requests were nearly identical form letters submitted by Sierra Club. While these hearing requests were in writing, all except for one requestor failed to provide the required contact information. Based on the lack of required contact information, the Executive Director recommends that the commission find that the requestors listed in Attachment A are not affected persons based on the criteria in 30 TAC § 55.201.

#### 2. Ellen Buchanan

The Executive Director reviewed the factors found in 30 TAC § 55.201(c) and (d), and § 55.203 for determining whether a requestor is an affected person, and recommends the commission find that Ellen Buchanan is not an affected person.

Ms. Buchanan submitted a hearing request during the comment period as part of a timely filed comment. The hearing request was the same identical form letter as the hearing requests submitted by the persons listed in Attachment A. The hearing request was in writing, provided the required contact information, and included issues that are the basis of her hearing request. In her hearing request, Ms. Buchanan expressed concern that emissions from the proposed plant may harm the nearby community and negatively affect the environment. Ms. Buchanan also expressed concern about the opportunity to review the permit. However, the hearing request did not describe any likely impact of the regulated activity on Ms. Buchanan's health and safety or on the use of her property. Therefore, Ms. Buchanan did not raise a personal justiciable interest.

Based on the address provided, the Executive Director determined that Ms. Buchanan resides approximately 35 miles from the proposed location of the plant. For air authorizations, distance from the proposed plant is particularly relevant to the issue

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of whether there is a likely impact of the regulated activity on a person's interests because of the dispersion and effects of individual air contaminants emitted from a plant. The natural resource that is the subject of this permit is the ambient air an individual breathes. Given the distance of Ms. Buchanan's address relative to the location of the terminal, her health and safety would not be impacted in a manner different from the general public. Therefore, the ED recommends that the commission find that Ellen Buchanan is not an affected person based on the criteria set out in 30 TAC § 55.203.

In her hearing request, Ellen Buchanan raised the following issues:

- *Issue 1:* Whether the proposed plant will negatively affect air quality.
- *Issue 2:* Whether the proposed plant will negatively affect human health.
- *Issue 3:* Whether the permit application was available for review to understand the proposed project.

# B. Groups and Associations

In addition to the requirements in 30 TAC § 55.201 and 30 TAC § 55.203, requests for a contested case hearing by a group or association, on an application filed on or after September 1, 2015, must meet the requirements in 30 TAC § 55.205(b). Specifically: (1) the group or association must have submitted timely comments on the application; (2) the request must identify, by name and physical address, one or more members of the group or association that would otherwise have standing to request a hearing in their own right; (3) the interests the group or association seeks to protect must be germane to the organization's purpose; and (4) the claim asserted or the relief requested may not require the participation of the individual members in the case.

# 1. Sierra Club

(1) Whether the group or association submitted timely comments on the application.

Joshua Smith, Staff Attorney with the Sierra Club, submitted a hearing request on behalf of Sierra Club, Environmental Integrity Project, Air Alliance Houston, Environment Texas, Clean Energy Fund of Texas, Inc., Texas Campaign for the Environment, and Port Arthur Community Action Network during the comment period. The issues raised in Sierra Club's hearing request were raised in the group's timely comments. The Executive Director recommends that the commission find that Gunter Clean Air has met this requirement for associational standing.

(2) Whether one or more members of the group or association would otherwise have standing to request a hearing in their own right.

Sierra Club's hearing request states the hearing request is being submitted "on behalf of the nearly 30,000 members in Texas – including the approximately 465 members and supporters who live, work, and recreate in or around Orange County, Texas." Sierra Club did not name a member who would have standing to request a contested case hearing in their own right. Accordingly, the Executive Director recommends that the commission find that Sierra Club has not met this requirement for associational standing.

(3) Whether the interests the group or association seeks to protect are germane to the organization's purpose.

The hearing request submitted by Sierra Club does not provide information regarding the organization's purpose. Therefore, the Executive Director recommends that the commission find that Sierra Club has not met this requirement for associational standing.

(4) Whether the claim asserted or the relief requested requires the participation of the individual members in the case.

The relief requested by Sierra Club does not require the participation of any individual member of Sierra Club. Thus, the Executive Director has determined that Sierra Club has met this requirement for associational standing.

Because Sierra Club did not meet all four requirements for associational standing, the Executive Director recommends the commission find that Sierra Club is not an affected person.

In Sierra Club's hearing request, it raised the following issues:

- *Issue 1:* Whether the proposed plant will negatively affect air quality.
- *Issue 2:* Whether the proposed plant will negatively affect human health.
- *Issue 3:* Whether the permit application was available for review to understand the proposed project.

# C. Whether Issues Raised are Referable to SOAH for a Contested Case Hearing

The Executive Director has analyzed issues raised in accordance with the regulatory criteria. The issues discussed were raised during the public comment period and addressed in the RTC. None of the issues were withdrawn. For applications submitted on or after September 1, 2015, only those issues raised in a timely comment by a requester whose request is granted may be referred.<sup>2</sup> The issues raised for this application and the ED's analysis and recommendations follow.

- 1) Whether the proposed plant will negatively affect air quality.
  - This issue involves a disputed question of fact, and was not withdrawn, and is relevant and material to the issuance of the draft permit. This issue was raised by the requesters in Attachment A as well as Ellen Buchanan and Sierra Club who the Executive Director recommends are not affected persons.
- 2) Whether the proposed plant will negatively affect human health.
  - This issue involves a disputed question of fact, and was not withdrawn, and is relevant and material to the issuance of the draft permit. This issue was raised by the requesters in Attachment A as well as Ellen Buchanan and Sierra Club who the Executive Director recommends are not affected persons.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Tx. Govt. Code § 2003.047(e-1); 30 TAC § 55.211(c)(2)(A)(ii).

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3) Whether the permit application was available for review to understand the proposed project.

This issue involves a disputed question of fact, and was not withdrawn, and is relevant and material to the issuance of the draft permit. This issue was raised by the requesters in Attachment A as well as Ellen Buchanan and Sierra Club who the Executive Director recommends are not affected persons.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

The Executive Director respectfully recommends the commission:

- 1) Find all hearing requests in this matter were timely filed; and
- 2) Find that all hearing requestors are not affected persons as a matter of law and deny their hearing requests.
- 3) If referred to SOAH, first refer the matter to Alternative Dispute Resolution for a reasonable period.
- 4) If referred to SOAH, the Executive Director recommends 180 days be the duration of the hearing.
- 5) If referred to SOAH, refer the following issues as identified by the Executive Director:
- *Issue 1:* Whether the proposed plant will negatively affect air quality.
- *Issue 2:* Whether the proposed plant will negatively affect human health.
- *Issue 3:* Whether the permit application was available for review to understand the proposed project.

Respectfully submitted,

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

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REPRESENTING THE
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ATTACHMENT A HEARING REQUESTORS

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# ATTACHMENT A ENTERGY TEXAS, INC. TCEQ DOCKET NO. 2023-0164-AIR; PERMIT NOS. 166032, GHGPSDTX210, PSDTX1598

# **HEARING REQUESTORS:**

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Sarah Frazier Houston, TX 77006

Maricela Carmona Frisco, TX 75033

Delaina Foster Houston, TX 77024

Kathyrn Davidson Austin, TX 78731

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Victoria Scharen Port Isabel, TX 78578

Craig Nazor Austin, TX 78758

Jessie Wheat

Krugerville, TX 76227

Richard Willing Terlingua, TX 79852

Joe Samples

West Lake Hills, TX 78746

Maury Jacob Bryan, TX 77801

Lisa Johnson

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Jeanne Jordan Carrollton, TX 75007

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Frank Blake Houston, TX 77006

,

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Jim & Sally Galindo Ellen Buchanan

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Beenda Perkins Joy Clark Sugar Land, TX 77479 Waco, TX 76705

Susan Derammelaere Cameron Babberney Arlngton, TX 76016 Cameron Babberney Austin, TX 78756

Scott Swanson Brian Dolenz Austin, TX 78704 Keller, TX 76248

Michael Gray Charlene Gagon Mansfield, TX 76063 Manchaca, TX 78652 Executive Director's Response to Hearing Requests – Attachment A Entergy Texas, Inc., Permit Nos. 166032, GHGPSDTX210, and PSDTX1598 Page 8 of 13

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Donald Cramer Robert Stark
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Susan Nichols Alfonso Lopez

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David Burnett Debra Atlas

Ben Arnold, TX 76519 Weslaco, TX 78596

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L A Toner

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Kristin Lewis Sandra Green

Stafford, TX 77497 San Antonio, TX 78217

Mark Blandford Marie Sophia Vassilakidis Amarillo, TX 79124 Houston, TX 77057

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Alpine, TX 79831
Mary Kearney
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Natasha Tuckett A Patterson College Station, TX 77845 Dallas, TX 75218 Executive Director's Response to Hearing Requests – Attachment A Entergy Texas, Inc., Permit Nos. 166032, GHGPSDTX210, and PSDTX1598 Page 9 of 13

DALLAS, TX 75218 Richard and Callie Clark Houston, TX 77030

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Vivian Andrews-Burke New Braunfels, TX 78130 San Antonio, TX 78260

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Pam Pepperell Deyanira Duarte Houston, TX 77005 Clute, TX 77531

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Sabrina Cook Lolita Muhm Missouri City, TX 77459 Brazoria, TX 77422

Katharine Sommerfield Joyce Dixon San Antonio, TX 78232 DALLAS, TX 75219

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Carol Whalen Austin, TX 78730 Executive Director's Response to Hearing Requests – Attachment A Entergy Texas, Inc., Permit Nos. 166032, GHGPSDTX210, and PSDTX1598 Page 12 of 13

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# **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

On this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023, a true and correct copy of the foregoing instrument was filed with the TCEQ's Office of the Chief Clerk, and served on all persons on the service list by the undersigned via deposit into the U.S. Mail, inter-agency mail, facsimile, electronic mail, or hand delivery.

Contessa N. Gay, Staff Attorney Environmental Law Division

# SERVICE LIST ENTERGY TEXAS, INC. TCEQ DOCKET NO. 2023-0164-AIR; PERMIT NOS. 166032, GHGPSDTX210, PSDTX1598

#### FOR THE CHIEF CLERK:

via electronic filing Laurie Gharis, Chief Clerk Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Office of Chief Clerk, P.O. Box 13087, MC-105 Austin, Texas 78711-3087

#### FOR THE APPLICANT:

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