

# Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

## Interoffice Memorandum

**To:** Commissioners **Date:** November 23, 2021

**Thru:** Laurie Gharis, Chief Clerk  
Toby Baker, Executive Director

**From:** BW Brent Wade, Director  
Office of Waste

**Docket No.:** 2021-0948-RUL

**Subject:** Commission Approval for Proposed Rulemaking  
Chapter 331, Underground Injection Control  
HB 1284: Relating to the regulation of the injection and geologic storage of  
carbon dioxide in this state  
Rule Project No. 2021-025-331-WS

**Background and reason(s) for the rulemaking:**

This rulemaking implements House Bill (HB) 1284, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (RS), 2021, addressing statutory authority over regulation of injection and geologic sequestration and storage, both onshore and offshore, of anthropogenic carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in Texas. HB 1284 amends Chapter 27 of the Texas Water Code (TWC), §382 of the Texas Health and Safety Code (THSC), §121 of the Natural Resources Code, and §202 of the Tax Code. The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) would have sole state jurisdiction over onshore and offshore injection and geologic storage of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> and would seek primacy from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for administration of the Class VI injection well program.

**Scope of the rulemaking:**

**A.) Summary of what the rulemaking would do:**

Under HB 1284, the RRC would have sole state jurisdiction over onshore and offshore injection and geologic storage of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub>. The proposed rulemaking removes TCEQ jurisdiction over the injection of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> produced by a clean coal project into a zone that is below the base of usable quality water and that is not productive of oil, gas, or geothermal resources by removing 30 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §331.11(d).

**B.) Scope required by federal regulations or state statutes:**

The rulemaking is in response to changes made to TWC, THSC, Natural Resources Code, and Tax Code by HB 1284.

**C.) Additional staff recommendations that are not required by federal rule or state statute:**

None.

**Statutory authority:**

The amended rule is proposed under TWC, §5.013, which establishes the general jurisdiction of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (commission); TWC §5.102, which provides the commission with the authority to carry out its duties and

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general powers under its jurisdictional authority as provided by TWC; TWC §5.103, which requires the commission to adopt any rule necessary to carry out its powers and duties under TWC and other laws of the state; and TWC §27.019, which authorizes the commission to adopt rules to implement the statutes regarding injection wells. The rulemaking implements HB 1284, 87th Texas Legislature, (RS), 2021; TWC, Chapter 27; THSC, Chapter 382; Natural Resources Code §121.003; and Tax Code §202.0545, which consolidate the jurisdiction over onshore and offshore Class VI underground injection control (UIC) wells solely to the RRC and directs the RRC to apply for and obtain primacy of this permitting program from the EPA.

**Effect on the:**

**A.) Regulated community:**

The RRC would seek primacy from the EPA for management of the state's Class VI injection program. Members of the regulated community seeking a permit or authorization for any type of injection and geologic sequestration of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> in this state must apply solely through the RRC.

**B.) Public:**

Class VI injection in Texas would be regulated by a single state agency, the RRC, rather than two separate state agencies, potentially leading to a more streamlined and efficient application and permit approval process, thus benefiting the public.

**C.) Agency programs:**

By repealing 30 TAC §331.11(d), the TCEQ's UIC program would no longer be involved with permitting or regulating any form of injection and geologic sequestration/storage of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub>.

**Stakeholder meetings:**

The commission did not hold any stakeholder meetings related to this rulemaking; however, a rule public hearing will be held virtually during the public comment period.

**Potential controversial concerns and legislative interest:**

Although permitting of Class VI injection wells under HB 1284 is delegated solely to the RRC, the TCEQ would be required to issue a letter of determination to an applicant who is pursuing a Class VI permit from the RRC stating that Class VI injection operations would not impact or interfere with any previous or existing Class I injection well, including any associated waste plume, or any other injection well authorized or permitted by the TCEQ.

**Would this rulemaking affect any current policies or require development of new policies?**

No.

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**What are the consequences if this rulemaking does not go forward? Are there alternatives to rulemaking?**

HB 1284 does not direct the TCEQ to adopt rules; however, HB 1284 removes the TCEQ's jurisdiction over regulation of any form of injection and geologic storage/sequestration of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> in this state. There are no alternatives to rulemaking.

**Key points in the proposal rulemaking schedule:**

**Anticipated proposal date:** December 15, 2021

**Anticipated *Texas Register* publication date:** December 31, 2021

**Anticipated public hearing date:** January 25, 2022

**Anticipated public comment period:** December 31, 2021 - February 1, 2022

**Anticipated adoption date:** May 18, 2022

**Agency contacts:**

Dan Hannah, Rule Project Manager, Radioactive Materials Division, (512) 239-2161

Diane Goss, Staff Attorney, (512) 239-5731

Cecilia Mena, Texas Register Rule/Agenda Coordinator, (512) 239-6098

**Attachments:**

HB 1284

cc: Chief Clerk, 2 copies  
Executive Director's Office  
Jim Rizk  
Morgan Johnson  
Brody Burks  
Office of General Counsel  
Dan Hannah  
Diane Goss  
Mattie Isturiz  
Cecilia Mena