

## Response to Public Comments on Eight TMDLs for Indicator Bacteria in Dickinson Bayou and Three Tidal Tributaries (Segments 1103 and 1104)

January 20, 2012

Tracking Number	Date Received	Affiliation of Commenter	Request or Comment	Summary of TCEQ Action or Explanation
001_01	9/29/11	Private Citizen (oral – Public Meeting)	Bridget Long commented that TCEQ should not continue to issue new permits for wastewater treatment plants discharging to Gum Bayou or Dickinson Bayou. Ms. Long claimed that people were getting sick as a result of swimming in the bayou and that the TCEQ was wasting money conducting studies instead of stopping wastewater treatment plants from being built.	Since the beginning of the TMDL in 2006, the TCEQ has increased inspections of wastewater treatment facilities, written enforcement orders to several wastewater treatment facilities operators, funded two separate plans to improve water quality, financed two major storm water demonstration projects, engaged local governments to improve collection and treatment of wastewater and storm water and is currently funding a plan to address leaking and improperly installed onsite sewage treatment systems in the Dickinson Bayou watershed. Ms. Long’s comments do not relate specifically to any technical or non-technical aspects of the TMDLs (i.e., estimation of maximum pollutant loads and load allocations). The TCEQ made no changes to the TMDL document as a result of these comments.
001_02	9/29/11	Private Citizen (oral – Public Meeting)	Hoi Heldt commented that no progress has been made to improve water quality in Dickinson Bayou. Ms. Heldt mentioned that she and another stakeholder felt they were not treated respectfully because the stakeholder meetings and public meetings were held at night. She asked for more involvement and better explanations of the issues. Ms. Heldt asked where the funding for the TMDL had gone and asked that TCEQ implement what is in the document now and stop studying the problem.	In addition to the actions described in the TCEQ’s response to Ms. Bridget Long’s comments (above), the TCEQ has funded the development of a stakeholder-driven TMDL implementation plan (I-Plan). A draft of the I-Plan was submitted to the TCEQ in September 2011 and the TCEQ has requested changes be made to the draft to increase its effectiveness. Stakeholder involvement in the development of the I-Plan is on-going. The TCEQ intends to implement the actions included in the final I-Plan that are within the authority of the TCEQ and to facilitate other consensus-based actions to improve water quality in Dickinson Bayou identified by watershed stakeholders in the I-Plan. Ms. Heldt’s comments do not relate specifically to any technical or non-technical aspects of the TMDLs (i.e., estimation of maximum pollutant loads and load allocations). The TCEQ made no changes to the TMDL document as a result of these comments.

Tracking Number	Date Received	Affiliation of Commenter	Request or Comment	Summary of TCEQ Action or Explanation
001_03	10/3/11	Private Citizen (written – email)	Jim Flex III commented that there are serious sanitation issues in Dickinson Bayou due to a variety of causes. Mr. Flex stated that no long term studies are needed, but that municipal and industrial discharges into the bayou should be stopped and residences within the service area of Galveston County Water Control and Improvement District #1 should be connected to the district’s sewer systems. Mr. Flex also recommended removing obstructions at the confluence with Dickinson Bay, construction of detention basins and diverting treated wastewater and storm water away from Dickinson Bayou.	Mr. Flex’ comments proposed activities to improve water quality in Dickinson Bayou. The comments do not relate specifically to any technical or non-technical aspects of the TMDLs (i.e., estimation of maximum pollutant loads and load allocations). Connecting residences to centralized wastewater treatment systems, mitigating and preventing illicit discharges, building detention facilities, removing obstructions at the confluence with Dickinson Bay, and diverting treated wastewater and storm water away from the bayou, as proposed by Mr. Flex, may improve water quality in the Bayou. However, the proposals are solution strategies, better addressed in the TMDL I-Plan. The TCEQ encouraged Mr. Flex to participate in the local work groups and committees currently developing the TMDL I-Plan. The TCEQ made no changes to the TMDL document as a result of these comments.
001_04	10/4/11	Private Citizen (written - letter)	Tom Ferris commented that drainage needed to be improved in Galveston County, including the Dickinson Bayou watershed. He proposed an aqueduct be built to divert water away from local bayous in times of flooding. Mr. Ferris also proposed diverting flow from Clear Creek into Dickinson Bayou at times of critical low flows via a pipeline. Mr. Ferris also questioned the validity of the current Dickinson Bayou drainage criteria developed by local authorities.	Mr. Ferris’ comments proposed engineering solutions to drainage problems in the area. The comments do not relate specifically to any technical or non-technical aspects of the TMDLs (i.e., estimation of maximum pollutant loads and load allocations). Increasing freshwater flow in Dickinson Bayou during critical periods, as proposed by Mr. Ferris, may affect water quality in the bayou. However, the proposal is a solution strategy, better addressed in the TMDL I-Plan. The TCEQ encouraged Mr. Ferris to participate in the local work groups and committees currently developing the TMDL I-Plan. The TCEQ made no changes to the TMDL document as a result of these comments.