



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Lineup of Legislation

Natural Outlook, Summer 2003

The TCEQ's playbook grows with new responsibilities, laws to implement

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The Legislature added new duties to the TCEQ's role of overseeing air and water quality and waste management. The agency has already begun analyzing new legislation and preparing for rule making. About 120 bills that passed during the regular session will affect the agency.

The legislation that will attract a great deal of attention is the measure restoring funding to the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan, which is critical to bringing the state into compliance with federal air quality standards. With a new appropriation, TCEQ projects will expand rapidly (see [Back on the Technology Track](#)).

Below are other highlights of environmental bills passed by the 78th Legislature

Air Quality

Emissions testing (SB 1159). This air quality measure allows areas in Texas participating in early action compacts to initiate programs to curb vehicle emissions. The early action compact is a voluntary plan designed to bring a metropolitan area into compliance with the new federal 8-hour ozone standard. Participating areas can ask the state to approve a local emissions testing program for cars and trucks. Austin, San Antonio, and Tyler-Longview-Marshall areas are eligible to initiate a program.

With emissions testing, which is already in place in 14 counties in the Houston and Dallas areas, cars and trucks are examined during annual safety inspections for emissions or problems with emissions control equipment. Vehicles failing the test are required to undergo repairs.

Aggregate facilities (HB 1287, HB 555, SB 1272). Several bills addressed the location and operating standards of aggregate facilities, such as concrete crushers and concrete batch plants. These operations are associated with construction or other projects and can emit a considerable amount of dust. The legislation addresses