

## TCE Fund Annual Report 2017

Texas Campaign for the Environment Fund worked successfully on a range of projects in 2017, primarily focused on toxic sites, waste and recycling, and safer chemicals.

### *Pushing for Progress on Cleaning up Polluted Sites*

For decades, International Paper's highly toxic waste, including cancer-causing dioxin, was dumped by a subsidiary of Waste Management Inc. in the San Jacinto River Waste Pits east of Houston. Much of the land subsided, submerging wastes under the San Jacinto River which feeds into Galveston Bay.

This site was declared a Superfund toxic waste site in 2008. Community leaders approached TCE Fund for assistance with informing the community in 2016 and we continued working in 2017 to educate area residents and federal decision-makers on the need to clean up this Superfund site.



Working with environmental justice allies in early 2017, TCE Fund began spotlighting other toxic sites in the Houston area that were endangering public health and not being adequately cleaned up. We also started connecting with groups across the country grappling with polluted sites under the leadership of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice led by Lois Gibbs of Love Canal fame.

Then Hurricane Harvey inundated several Superfund sites, bringing national attention to this and other pollution problems in the Houston region. After the storm, dioxin levels 2,300 times higher than the levels allowed by the EPA were measured at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits. A few weeks later, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt finally announced that he would order International Paper and Waste Management to pay to fully remove the waste pits, at an estimated cost of \$115 million.

### *Moving Forward on Zero Waste in Major Texas Cities*

As part of our DFW Zero Waste Project, TCE Fund examined more than 40 municipal contracts with private haulers in the DFW area to determine best practices to expand recycling services. Our research found 26 cities in the Metroplex that could expand voluntary recycling services in multi-family properties through amended contracts or other policies to make these services universal. If these cities decided to adopt multi-family recycling, close to one million additional residents would have recycling services.

TCE Fund research found that the Apartment Association of Greater Dallas (AAGD) had been over-estimating the number of apartment complexes that provide recycling. The AAGD reported participation rates at 44% in 2016 and 32% in 2017, but TCE Fund found the actual rate was 23% in 2017.

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of TCE Fund is to engage people and communities through face-to-face public education, grassroots organizing and action-oriented research for a cleaner and healthier Texas.*

TCE Fund research also bolstered the successful effort to improve Fort Worth’s long-range solid management plan. The final plan included programs that TCE Fund identified to boost Fort Worth’s recycling goals, as well as a curbside composting pilot project that will begin in 2018.

We also worked with residents and recycling advocates in Houston to ensure that the City’s new long-term recycling contract would be cost-effective and include glass recycling, which was dropped in the short-term contract signed in 2016. The new contract terms excluded the mixed waste processing scheme known as “One Bin for All,” marking a final victory over this bad proposal.

Recycling in public places such as parks and transit stops is another Zero Waste strategy that TCE Fund is pursuing, starting in Austin. TCE Fund has been meeting with allies researching best practices for this strategy.

**Research and Education on the Value of Local Tree Protection Ordinances**

When tree protection ordinances become a focus for statewide pre-emption, there was little knowledge of how many tree ordinances there were in Texas. TCE Fund and allies eventually found more than 110 such local laws from Brownsville to Orange, and Tyler to Abilene. TCE Fund helped pull together research on the wide-ranging benefits of tree canopies including flood control.

**Victory on Toxic Chemicals in Consumer Products**

Together with the national Mind the Store campaign, TCE Fund pressed Best Buy to phase out toxic chemicals in the electronics they sell. Our canvassers generated thousands of letters to company officials, and they responded by announcing a new chemical management program in 2017. In addition, TCE Fund continues to work with major national and regional home furnishing chains on phasing out toxic chemicals in furniture and flooring.

**Strong Support for TCE Fund Initiatives**

TCE Fund has diversified its funding sources with important new contributions made by Texas foundations. The Meadows Foundation awarded TCE Fund \$60,000 which is being matched by other foundations and generous individual supporters. Other 2017 supporters include Patagonia Foundation, Simmons Sisters Fund, Winkler Family Foundation, Eileen Fisher Foundation and William J.J. Gordon Foundation.

TCE Fund also receives funding from community giving days such as Amplify Austin, North Texas Giving Day and Give 5 for Mother Earth. TCE Fund participates in EarthShare of Texas, which facilitates employee giving through payroll contributions and other workplace partnerships. Other generous major donors and thousands of community contributions from people contacted through door-to-door canvassing continue to be critical to TCE Fund’s success.

**2017 Financials**

Balance on hand 12/31/16 .....	\$187,517
Total 2017 Income .....	\$238,840
Total 2017 Expenditures .....	\$223,330
Balance on hand 12/31/17 .....	\$203,027



**2017 ROSTER**  
**TCE FUND BOARD & STAFF**

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