TEXAS PASSES TV TAKEBACK LAW

TCE celebrates success at the State Legislature and takes on a behemoth

Just three words can sum up the year Texas Campaign for the Environment had in 2011: raising the bar.

TCE organized unprecedented amounts of public support last year for common-sense recycling policies in Texas. Grassroots organizers went into communities all across the state that TCE had never visited before and found strong new members at every turn. We accomplished many of our top priorities during the 2011 Texas Legislative Session; our biggest victory came when Gov. Rick Perry signed the TV TakeBack Bill into law instead of issuing a veto as he did in 2009. Then we raised the bar again by launching a campaign to convince the world’s largest retailer, Walmart, to offer free e-waste recycling at all its stores in Texas. This is our biggest challenge yet, but we’ve seen this work countless times before—when the people lead, the leaders follow.

PROGRESS COMES ONE STEP AT A TIME

Passing the TV TakeBack Law is a huge step in the right direction, but it’s still just one step. The next task is to ensure the new law actually gets the recycling results we need to keep toxic waste out of our air, water and land. Our state environmental agency (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, or TCEQ) is currently creating the rules it will use to implement and enforce the new law. TCE is pressing the state agency to adopt strong rules that will lead to responsible recycling—and to reject weak rules that will only lead to more toxic dumping. Your letters to State Senators and Representatives are once again the strongest tool in our efforts to convince them to step up and urge the environmental agency to enforce strong rules that will lead to free, convenient recycling for all Texas residents.

TAKE IT BACK, WALMART!

Quick: after Best Buy, what company is the nation’s second-leading electronics retailer? What retailer has established storefront locations in every corner of Texas? Where would the easiest and most convenient place be for most Texans to drop off their old TVs, computers and other e-waste for recycling? If you answered “Walmart” to all three of those questions, then you know exactly why we’re urging CEO Mike Duke to take back old and obsolete electronics for free recycling. After all, Best Buy has been doing this since 2009. Our message is simple: “Match it, Walmart!”

MOVING A GIANT

In addition to our grassroots efforts to generate letters to company officials, TCE “flash action” groups have organized creative, theatrical mini-demonstrations inside Walmart stores in Texas and throughout the nation. Direct actions like these were critical to our success in convincing other companies like Dell, Apple and Samsung to start recycling.

To be sure, Walmart is a behemoth, a huge company that doesn’t change its business practices overnight. That’s why we need you to generate the persistent consumer demand for convenient electronics recycling that we know exists throughout Texas. Take a moment to send Walmart a message—visit www.takeitbackwalmart.com today! You can also watch the videos of our “flash action” groups on this website and share them with your friends, too. With your help, we’ll keep right on achieving the improbable.

ZAC TRAHAN, TCE METROPLEX

“This law will help every county in the State of Texas. This is just the right thing to do.”

ED JANECKA, FAYETTE COUNTY JUDGE

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20TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY RECAP
In 2011, Texas Campaign celebrated our 20th anniversary in style! An incredible group of Austin and Dallas leaders—Jose Aliseda (Brownsville) and Robin Schneider (Dallas)—were honored by our Board for their decades of outstanding leadership and contributions. It was such a fun night that we’re holding another event next Fall, so be on the lookout for a Save the Date message from TCE.

2012 was a year of extraordinary challenges at the State Capitol. While passing the TV recycling law was our highest priority, there were many other issues coming our way. Here are just a few highlights:

• Our bill to get manufacturers to recycle mercury-containing thermostats passed in the Texas Senate, but time ran out before it could make it through the House.

• When a powerful legislator attempted to change state law to give renewable energy credit for the “gasification” (a fancy word for burning) of trash and recyclables, TCE worked with the renewable energy industry and convinced lawmakers that this would undercut the growing renewable energy sector and waste resources by turning valuable recyclable materials into ash.

• We stopped bills that would have pre-empted local governments from passing comprehensive ordinances to stop pollution from single-use-check-out-bags. TCE worked closely with local government leaders from Brownsville, Ft. Stockton and South Padre Island—the first three Texas cities to pass such ordinances.

• Late in the session, TCE pulled out all the stops to block two measures that would have eliminated Texans’ rights to fight polluting facilities in their communities. We helped mobilized such fierce opposition that even the sponsor of one of the bills withdrew his support for this provision.

2012 marks my 15th year with TCE. I can’t tell you what a privilege it is to work with this terrific group. I have the honor of working with talented organizers who go door-to-door every weekend or speak on the phone and have personal conversations to engage Texans in issues that affect our lives and our children’s futures. You and I are among the 45,000 proud members of TCE. Together, we made a huge impact on futures. You and I are among the 45,000 proud members of TCE. Together, we made a huge impact on futures. You and I are among the 45,000 proud members of TCE. Together, we made a huge impact on futures.

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In 2012, TCE is launching the I Recycle, I Vote Pledge, a campaign to get 50,000 Texans to keep recycling in mind when they go to the polls. If you haven’t yet taken the pledge, please do so. You can simply check the box labeled “I recycle, I vote” on the enclosed return envelope when you send in your membership contribution or sign up online at www.icyclevote.org. Afterwards, we’ll send you a bumper sticker so you can show off your commitment to elect politicians in Texas who care about recycling. Of course, TCE is a non-partisan organization and, as always, will not endorse any candidates. However, we believe people running for office at every level should know that Texans want robust recycling policies and the thousands of jobs that come with them.

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In Central Texas, TCE won a huge victory in getting the City of Austin to pass the state’s first comprehensive Zero Waste plan. Over the next 30 years, the city will divert 95% of its waste from landfills through a combination of reducing, reusing, recycling, composting and other innovative programs. Solid Waste Services has since been renamed the Austin Resource Recovery Department, a signal of new values at City Hall.

Part of the Zero Waste plan is the elimination of persistent waste problems such as those posed by single-use-bags—plastic and paper—given out at retail and grocery stores. On March 1st, 2012, after months of TCE’s persistence that resulted in over seven thousand citizen comments, the Austin City Council voted unanimously in favor of an ordinance to eliminate the free distribution of disposable bags at checkout counters.

For more information about any of the above projects, please contact yolanda@texasenvironment.org or call 512.326.5555.

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Texas Campaign for the Environment (TCE) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and is an equal opportunity employer. As such, TCE is committed to providing a workplace that is free from discrimination. TCE believes that all individuals, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, religion, or any other legally protected status, have the same right to work in an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination. If you believe you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination, you may file a complaint in accordance with the policies and procedures described in TCE’s Sexual Harassment Policy. You may also contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (or the appropriate state agency), which is responsible for enforcing federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace. The information obtained through any such complaint is confidential and is subject to the same confidentiality requirements as any other personnel information.

TCE helps Texans to speak environmentally, to understand that much work needs to be done in the nation’s fourth largest metro area. Recycling and waste diversion creates jobs and saves taxpayers money. In a city that is a leader in economic development and the energy capital of the world, there is no reason that Houston cannot be a resource recovery giant as well.

Last year, TCE Houston started a long-term campaign to expand and improve recycling for all Houstonians at home, work and play. The campaign began when TCE helped defeat a city plan to enter into a 20-year, no-bid contract for recycling services that would do little to expand recycling citywide.

Recognizing that Houston is the only large city in Texas that does not yet have curbside recycling for all its residents, we understand that much work needs to be done in the nation’s fourth largest metro area. Recycling and waste diversion creates jobs and saves taxpayers money. In a city that is a leader in economic development and the energy capital of the world, there is no reason that Houston cannot be a resource recovery giant as well.

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After years of grassroots community organizing with TCE, the thrill of winning campaigns still trumps record heat waves and the satisfaction of bringing a fresh perspective on the democratic process to a Texan’s doorstep always softens even the loudest dog bark. The progress we’ve made here in Texas is truly a thing to be proud of—and it all begins with the connections we make on porches across the state. In these short conversations, we interrupt prime-time broadcasting to find common ground on no-nonsense issues that affect all of us. We make a difference, you and I, together with all the canvassers pounding the pavement and supporters like you who write a check and a letter (or eleven). The steps we take each day add up to a cleaner Texas and a stronger democracy. Thank you for being a part of this work...and thanks for all the water-bottle refills!!!

RENÉE VAUGHAN, TCE AUSTIN

TCE had another record-breaking year in 2011 thanks to your support. As always, we are dedicated to stretching each grassroots contribution to ensure your dollars make profound impacts. Our financial statement is below.

WHERE WE GOT THE FUNDING IN 2011

Revenue Total: $1,694,362
- 87% Grassroots contributions from over 63,000 Texans
- 9% Special projects funding
- 4% Reimbursed expenses, miscellaneous

Expense Total: $1,638,130
- 78% Environmental advocacy, community organizing & public education
- 7% Managing TCE
- 15% Fundraising to sustain TCE

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TCE marked its 20th Anniversary by showcasing the eco-friendly talents of dozens of fashion designers and organic chefs at our Trash Makeover Fashion Reuse Challenge. With brilliant designs, a huge silent auction and over 300 attendees, the event was a rousing success. In fact, we had such a great time that we’ve decided to make it an annual event! This September, we plan to throw an even bigger party when we turn 21, so look out for details!

THANKS TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS!

source: TCE FINANCIAL STATEMENT, 2011