



## TEXAS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



TCE Organizers Bryant Pippin, Jeff Jacoby (speaking), Lauren Morgan and Ashlee Whitaker. Photo by Josh Vincent.

### TCE Works with Local Governments to Press for Producer Takeback

Local governments are joining our efforts to implement recycling of electronic waste through producer takeback. They are embracing the idea of removing the burden of recycling and disposing of electronic waste – and the toxic materials contained in those electronics – from the shoulders of local governments.

In vote after vote, local governments are supporting producer takeback resolutions unanimously.

*“Dallas fully supports having electronics producers in charge of recycling their products. This lets the companies that have the power to redesign products show a bottom line benefit for making their products easy to recycle – and a bottom line penalty if they fail to design for recycling.”*

- Dallas Councilmember Linda Koop

- In the small Northeast Texas town of Avery, local officials are battling against the siting of a new landfill in their area. They saw the wisdom of reducing the amount of toxic material going into landfills.
- The City of Georgetown north of Austin was the first city in Texas to pass a resolution, in June 2006.
- The Dallas City Council voted to make this a priority when their advocates are working in the State Capitol.

continues as RESOLUTIONS on page 3

## TCE Annual Report 2006

### E-WASTE UPDATES

#### Progress Report on TCE's Corporate Campaigning on Electronic Waste

In 2006, TCE continued to pressure electronics companies, particularly Apple and Dell. Both companies increased their commitment to producer takeback recycling:

#### Apple Makes More Progress in 2006

Apple CEO Steve Jobs and Apple Board member Al Gore Jr. received thousands of letters from TCE supporters. TCE organized activists from many states, including some Nashville residents, to serenade outside Al Gore's Nashville headquarters. Activists delivered an oversized card to Mr. Gore's office and sang new lyrics to the tune of the old song “Dancing in the Streets,” in which we were “Calling out to Mister Gore, We're looking for a chance to meet.”


Within a few months, Apple announced it would start taking back computers of any brand if consumers purchase a new Mac. TCE Executive Director Robin Schneider attended the Apple shareholder meeting where Mr. Jobs gave Mr. Gore credit for the advances in environmental policies and programs at the company.

TCE is still working for more improvements in Apple's programs such as setting goals for its recycling programs and supporting legislation in favor of producer takeback recycling. In addition, Apple has yet to set goals for the phase out of certain toxic materials as other companies have done.

#### Dell Sets a New Global Standard for Producer TakeBack

TCE continues to work with Dell to improve its environmental performance. Dell had been on the sidelines as legislation had been debated in state legislatures, while HP was actively working with other producer takeback advocates.

Working with allies in the Computer TakeBack Campaign, TCE took the lead to press Dell to fulfill a commitment made in 2004 to support producer takeback policies. To our delight, Dell not only agreed to become more engaged with public policy, but also stepped out further than any other global electronics company and agreed to take back any Dell product worldwide for free.

Dell has also decided to become a leader in addressing climate change issues. TCE was given a seat at the table with socially responsible shareholders, academics and others to advise Dell on developing its climate change strategy and improving its socially responsible reporting. 



Robin Schneider

## At Texas Campaign for the Environment we don't just talk about democracy, we put it into action.

TCE's grassroots organizers knocked on the doors of more than 300,000 Texas households in 2006. And you responded! Texans contributed more than \$570,000 to our door-to-door canvassers and more than \$110,000 to our phone canvassers. On top of that, Texans wrote almost

25,000 letters to decision-makers on our issues – and authorized our phone canvass to send nearly 7000 telewires on their behalf.

I'm proud to be involved with a group that practices doorstep democracy 52 weeks a year. Above all else, I'm so thankful that we can count you among our thousands of supporters.

We celebrated our 15th anniversary in 2006 with our Earth Night event on October 18th in Austin. We honored prison health and safety officer Leroy Smith and responsible electronics recycler David Ritter. They have moved into the national spotlight for their courageous stance against dirty and unfair prison recycling of e-waste.

Leroy Smith spoke movingly of his work documenting how unsafe e-waste recycling in federal prisons was poisoning the air and showing up in the blood of inmates, guards and other prison staff. We heard how he was risking his career speaking out against the prison management's utter disregard for this toxic contamination.

Our other honoree, David Ritter, gave a heart-breaking account of having to lay off more than 65 percent of his staff when the Department of Defense gave his contract away –without a bid– to Federal Prison Industries (FPI). Ritter fought back when FPI was later allowed to bid on contracts set aside for small businesses even though FPI is a \$600

million operation. Ritter hired attorneys and forced the EPA to terminate FPI's small business contract in 2005.

TCE's Earth Night event coincided with the national E-scrap Conference in Austin. A photographer for National Geographic clicked away as TCE activists erected a makeshift prison cell and used hammers to replicate the rudimentary tools used in prison recycling. This action was part of a strategy to release a national report on prison e-recycling.

TCE will be working hard with Dell, HP, local governments, environmental groups, people who live near landfills and other allies, to channel the rising concern with electronic waste. Our goal is to pass state and national legislation to set up producer takeback recycling systems that require responsible recycling and a reduction in the use of toxic materials in electronics.

I highly recommend two great books were released in 2006 about the electronics industry and e-waste:

*Challenging the Chip: Labor Rights and Environmental Justice in the Global Electronics Industry* is a revealing look at the dark side of the technology industry. One chapter that I co-wrote details the efforts by TCE and others that won Dell over to embrace producer takeback recycling of e-waste.

*High Tech Trash: Digital Devices, Hidden Toxics and Human Health* exposes the health and environmental impacts of tech manufacturing and disposal and details the solutions.

The first 25 members who send in a \$100 contribution in response to this newsletter will receive a copy of one of these books– so don't delay! Simply indicate on your check or on the envelope which book you'd like.

Thank you for being a vital part of our continuing mission to make democracy work to improve the quality of life in our state and on our planet. 🌟

*For SLL*

## LANDFILL CAMPAIGN UPDATES

### Activists in Trash Battles Across Texas Draw on TCE's Expertise

Texas Campaign for the Environment continues to take a leading role working with groups around the state fighting problem landfills. TCE is able to provide strategic support as Texans face powerful trash companies that sometimes want to run roughshod over local concerns. Texas has more landfill capacity than any other state. This over-abundance undercuts recycling, and can lead to cutthroat competition. Some companies are cutting corners on public health and safety protection in the pursuit of competitive pricing.

### Laredo Area Coalition Boosted by TCE Activism

In April 2006, five TCE activists traveled to Laredo to assist the Highway 359 Coalition in their fight against a proposed landfill in a sensitive area of Webb County. The City of Laredo landfill serves the area. Residents worry that the proposed Ponderosa Landfill would make Webb County a dumping ground for a large region.

### Williamson County Groups Reach the Courtroom

In the summer of 2004, TCE began organizing in the Hutto area of Williamson County to inform local residents of the plans to almost triple the size of the county landfill, which is run by Waste Management. At that time, few people were aware of the expansion plans and profound lack of oversight by county officials. However, in October 2006, twelve different individuals and organizations obtained official legal standing to oppose the expansion. TCE continues to press county officials to pursue a more forward-thinking approach that embraces aggressive recycling and composting measures not just a bigger mountain of trash. To stay involved with local organizations fighting the expansion, visit [www.huttocitizensgroup.org](http://www.huttocitizensgroup.org).

### TCE Aids Fort Bend and Brazoria County Activists

State Representative Dora Olivo of Fort Bend County has been working with many of her constituents to oppose the expansion of Allied

*"Support for the producer takeback electronics recycling resolution cut across all the lines of division on the Kyle City Council. An aide to Governor Perry supported it. Councilmembers that are registered Democrats and Republicans voted yes. It definitely helped that so many Kyle residents wrote letters to support it."*

- City of Kyle Mayor Pro Tem David Salazar

- Other local governments passing resolutions include Highland Village in Denton County and Lakeway in Central Texas where local resident John Hoopingarner took the lead in bringing this to the attention of Mayor Steve Swan. In Hays County, where local residents Dianne Wassenich and Diane Laumer got involved, the County Commissioners and City Councils of San Marcos and Kyle are all on board.

Many local officials have expressed amazement at the outpouring of grassroots support for the resolutions evident in the thousands of letters written by TCE supporters. TCE and our sister organization Public Research Works have created a toolkit to provide practical pointers for Texans who want to take the initiative to get their local governments on board. Visit TCE's website ([www.texasenvironment.org](http://www.texasenvironment.org)) to download the toolkit. You can also contact TCE's Dallas or Austin offices to learn how you can help get your city or county on the bandwagon. 🌱

### Landfills, Recycling & Climate Change: Did you know?

- Landfills are the single largest human-made source of methane gas in the US
- Methane is 23 times more effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide.
- Recycling half of your household waste would reduce your carbon dioxide emissions by 6%!
- Recycling one ton of aluminum cans results in four tons of greenhouse gas reductions.

Source: Mass. DEP & Californians Against Waste

### LANDFILL CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Waste's Blue Ridge Landfill and called TCE for help. Many nearby residents from adjacent Brazoria County were also alarmed at the prospect of the landfill expanding. TCE joined hundreds of neighbors at a public meeting. Brazoria County and the City of Pearland subsequently voted in opposition to the proposed expansion.

### TCE Helps Sink Deal with Problem Landfill in Northeast Travis County - Again

In December 2006, Travis County Commissioners were looking as if they might again consider signing an agreement with BFI/Allied Waste that has long been opposed by area residents. TCE helped bring pressure on county officials by generating phone calls from Travis County residents. Thankfully, the item was removed from the agenda at the last minute. 🌱

## The Texas Legislature Needs to Hear from You!

### Producer TakeBack Recycling of Electronic Waste

If electronics producers had to take back their products for proper recycling and disposal, there would be less toxic trash heading for Texas landfills and incinerators. Dell, HP, and many Texas cities are on board. Look for good bills to be introduced by Rep. Elliott Naishtat, Senator Kirk Watson, Senator Eliot Shapleigh and possibly others.

### Restore The Right To A Public Meeting When A New Polluting Facility Is Proposed -

At the end of the last regular session, the Texas Legislature took away the public's right to a meeting when new hazardous waste, trash and sludge facilities are proposed. This bill would restore that right.

### Ten-Year Term for Trash Permits

Currently, there is no time deadline on trash landfills, transfer stations and other facilities. There are 45 landfills in the state that report having at least 100 years left on their permits.

This bill would bring landfill permits in line with air and water permits, and permits for industrial hazardous waste facilities. Trash companies could renew their ten-year permits as other major facilities do. Rep. Dora Olivo will be introducing the bill.

### Beefing up the Permit Review Process for Trash Permits



In 2001, the Legislature started requiring the state environmental agency to at least review trash facility permits every five years. This bill will broaden the permit review and will require more public input and a deeper examination of potential problems at trash facilities when the reviews are performed. Sen. Zaffirini will author the Senate bill.

**Write your State Representative and State Senator to support these bills.** For updates on bill numbers and progress, check the TCE website. To find out who represents you, go to [www.capitol.state.tx.us](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us) and click on "Who Represents Me" or go directly to: [www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us](http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us). 🌱

### Use these addresses to contact your elected officials:

#### State Senators:

The Honorable (name)  
PO Box 12068  
Austin TX 78711

#### State Representatives:

The Honorable (name)  
PO Box 2910  
Austin TX 78768



## TCE Annual Meeting March 25 & Grassroots Advocacy Day March 26

Annual Meeting - March 25 at Texas Disposal Systems  
Southeast Travis County, 1-4 pm

Includes potluck lunch and tour of landfill, composting facilities, and exotic game ranch.

Join TCE for its Grassroots Advocacy Day at the Capitol on Monday March 26.

**Call 512-326-5655 to RSVP for these events.**

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



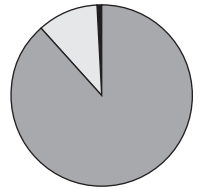
**TEXAS CAMPAIGN  
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

**611 S. Congress Ave. Suite 200  
Austin, TX 78704**




Texas Campaign for the Environment is dedicated to stretching its dollars and focusing on our mission of protecting public health and the environment in Texas. Here's an overview of where our funds came from and what they were spent on. (Source: TCE IRS Form 990 2006)

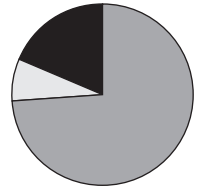
### Where TCE's 2006 contributions came from: Income Total \$736,490

-  **\$652,213** Grassroots contributions
-  **\$78,487** Restricted projects funding
-  **\$5,790** Reimbursed expenses, tax refund, misc.



### How those contributions are spent: Expense Total \$725,589

-  **\$537,069** Educating & Mobilizing Texans on Public Health & Environmental Issues
-  **\$54,585** Managing organization
-  **\$133,936** Fundraising



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## TCE Helps Slow Down the Coal Rush

The situation isn't good. More than half of Texans breathe unhealthy air. Current plans to reduce smog in the Metroplex and Greater Houston area will not succeed in cleaning the air to federal health standards by the legal deadline. The skies of Austin and San Antonio are on the brink of failing the health standards. Many anglers cannot eat the fish they catch because of high levels of mercury in many Texas waterways. Texas emits more global warming gases than any other state.

For all these reasons and more, the rush to build nineteen coal plants met with strong

opposition from the public, business groups, faith-based organizations, government officials, and others. TCE organizers traveled to cities and small towns where coal plants are proposed to educate and mobilize people about the health impacts of dirty coal plants. We are celebrating significant victories in helping slow and possibly stop many of these unnecessary polluting coal plants.

### TCE Mobilizes Local Opposition

In Robertson and Falls Counties, just east of Waco, TCE worked with the SEED Coalition and Our Land, Our Lives to gather names for ads in the local newspapers calling for the use of the cleanest technology possible. In Mt. Pleasant and Henderson, TCE orga-

nizers alerted residents to upcoming public meetings about coal plants planned locally.

### Victories in the Making

On Feb. 20th, a state District judge in Austin overturned Governor Perry's order to fast track the permits. Just days later, three equity firms proposed a controversial buyout of Texas Utilities (TXU) - provided that they drop plans for eight new coal plants and make other changes to improve their environmental stewardship. Whatever happens with the deal, these eight plants appear to be off the table. However, there are still at least eleven others in the works. To stay updated, visit [www.stopthecoalplant.org](http://www.stopthecoalplant.org). 