

LONE STAR STATE OF RECYCLING

TCE works on diverse waste and recycling issues because it makes a difference

When you tug on a string in nature, you find it is connected to everything else. ~ JOHN MUIR

This timeless quote from one of America's original preservationists illustrates well the fact that many seemingly unrelated local and global environmental problems are actually closely interconnected. Some might feel overwhelmed at times, but we must remember that if our environmental and economic problems are connected, so then are the solutions! This is the guiding principle that keeps us motivated and keeps us committed to working on a broad range of waste and recycling issues after 20 years of activism: when we win, we see real, concrete improvements in people's lives.

SMALL ACTS, BIG SOLUTIONS

For people who live or work near our ever-growing landfills and waste facilities, the need to ramp up recycling could not be any more obvious. Poorly-run waste facilities can pollute the air, water and land, just as other industries such as refineries and power plants do. So first and foremost, recycling and reducing waste prevents pollution and protects public health. But if you look closer, you'll see recycling helps in many other areas.



WORKERS AT A RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY IN CENTRAL TEXAS

For instance, clearly the worst environmental disaster of 2010 was the BP oil spill. In modern manufacturing, oil is utilized in a broad array of consumer products (think plastic) and it accounts for much of the energy used to create and distribute them. In fact, 10% of the oil we produce is used to bring us plastic products. Recycling and reducing waste means reducing the need to drill more wells—and of course less drilling should mean less spilling.

Recently, Americans' primary concern has been record-setting unemployment. While big polluters often try to convince us

that we have to choose between a healthy economy and a clean environment, the truth is just the opposite: waste reduction and recycling means less pollution and more jobs. In fact, recycling our resources creates at least ten times as many jobs as sending our trash to landfills! The bottom line is recycling helps the environment and the economy.

TWO DECADES OF PROGRESS

When TCE first began in 1991, some of our first victories were helping start citywide curbside recycling programs in North Texas and Household Hazardous Waste centers in Houston. Since then, recycling has spread throughout the state—and we're still making headway every year. For instance, last year TCE and other recycling advocates helped convince the City of Austin to renegotiate its money-losing recycling contract and choose a better service partner that is now keeping the jobs and revenue in Central Texas. We're also involved in on-going efforts to expand Austin's recycling programs to include businesses, apartments and other multi-family dwellings. In the Metroplex, TCE helped the neighbors of a problem trash transfer station secure meaningful protections for their community...after nearly two years of negotiating (and sometimes fighting). And of course, across the state, we're working to pass environmental legislation to improve recycling for all Texans.

RECYCLING OUR RESOURCES CREATES
AT LEAST TEN TIMES AS MANY JOBS
AS SENDING OUR TRASH TO LANDFILLS.



WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2011

Now is a critical time for recycling advocates in Texas: from now until June, we're in the midst of one of the toughest state legislative sessions for the environment in memory. You can help, today and throughout the spring, by communicating your support for these issues to your state lawmakers.

Outside the Capitol, we're also assisting local communities fighting liquid waste facilities, toxic waste injection wells and numerous landfill expansions. These battles are about making a difference in people's lives and protecting our quality of life. But we also know this work has connections that go beyond our own backyard. We want to make waste itself obsolete, and we believe Texas can, should and must get with the (recycling) program.

 ZAC TRAHAN, TCE HOUSTON

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ROBIN SCHNEIDER

Thank you for being a vital part of TCE's 20th anniversary this year. We never would have made it this far for this long without you—or y'all, since we're talking Texas.

Over the last year, Texans in communities across the state have welcomed TCE organizers. Nearly 45,000 people became members, and our supporters sent more than 60,000 letters to corporate and elected officials. Thank you all, from those of you right down the road from our home offices in Austin, Dallas and Houston to the thousands

throughout the Hill Country, North Texas and the Gulf Coast who continue to support TCE. I'd also like to give a special shout-out for the folks in places like Lubbock, Big Spring, San Angelo, Beeville, Texarkana, Longview and Paris (Texas, of course). At TCE, we know that if we want accountability from our elected officials at all levels—as well as big corporations—we need to organize communities all across Texas.

In 2007, Texas was the eighth (and biggest) state to pass a law requiring electronics producer to provide consumers with recycling. Now 23 states have these laws! The good news is that in 2010 more than 24.3 million pounds of electronics were recycled here because of the Texas law—almost double the 2009 total. The bad news is Texas is still lagging behind many other states that are recycling 6 times more per person.

Other states that have weak laws like ours, such as Oklahoma and Virginia, are having the same problem. It's not an issue of Texans not wanting to recycle—most people and local governments aren't even aware of the law, and companies can get away with telling consumers their only option is to mail back their computer or monitor. As we work to strengthen the law and educate the public, we know we can't rest until all Texans have truly convenient recycling options.

Still, your support is leading to fundamental change! It's almost a waste-revolution to shift the financial burden for recycling consumer products from local governments and taxpayers to the product manufacturers themselves. Some companies are already responding by redesigning their products with recycling in mind and phasing out hazardous materials in the manufacturing process. That's real, concrete progress. If you haven't already done so, I urge you to check out the short, but extremely educational webfilm, *The Story of Electronics* at www.StoryofElectronics.com.

This year we are also seeing real action at the local level. In 2010, San Antonio, San Marcos and Austin expanded recycling opportunities to people living in apartments and condos. Houston's recycling rate has gone from 5% to 25% in just a few years. Texarkana's curbside recycling program has taken off. Brownsville, Ft. Stockton and South Padre Island became the first three Texas cities to pass local ordinances to limit plastic bag pollution. The City of Austin calculated that plastic check-out bags cost the city and its taxpayers \$850,000 each year!

It's hard to imagine what might change by 2031 when TCE celebrates our second 20 years of environmental victories. But with friends and supporters like you backing us, I'm confident that we'll all be proud of the gains we've made and the grassroots activism that made it all possible. 🌱

Robin Schneider

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MEET THE TCE STAFF



TCE AUSTIN



TCE METROPLEX



TCE HOUSTON

TCE is fortunate to have the largest group of dedicated, hard-working, passionate environmental organizers and activists in the state. Of course, you already knew that—whenever a TCE canvasser contacts you at the door or on the phone, it's plain to see the enthusiasm that drives us and the persistence that wins campaigns. Our unwavering commitment makes us the only environmental organization in Texas with permanent door-to-door grassroots organizing efforts in each of the state's largest metropolitan areas. We can't thank you enough for generosity you've shown us over the course of the last twenty years!



2011 LEGISLATIVE GOALS

It's that time again. Every two years in Austin, for a limited-time engagement, the Texas State Legislature rolls into town for a policymaking hoedown under the big pink dome. Because our lawmakers only convene January through May every other year, each session is an exercise in controlled chaos as they move through initiatives ranging from a simple resolution to celebrate the retirement of a noted public servant to a complex omnibus bill to overhaul the Texas Water Code. This session, TCE is working with legislators from both sides of the aisle on legislation to protect our natural resources and promote sustainable economic growth.

TV RECYCLING

In 2009, Texas lawmakers responsibly—and overwhelmingly—voted in favor of adding TVs to the Electronics TakeBack Law. The bill was designed as a market-based solution for recycling the millions of old and obsolete televisions making their way to landfills, along with millions of pounds of lead and other toxins. Unfortunately and inexplicably, Governor Perry vetoed the bill forty-eight hours before it would have become law. This session, the TV recycling legislation is at the top of TCE's agenda. To this end, Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa) and Sen. Kirk Watson (D-Austin) have filed House Bill 1966 and Senate Bill 329.

RECYCLING REFUND

Discarded plastic or glass bottles and aluminum cans litter Texas highways, beaches and green spaces, ultimately making their way into our rivers, lakes and streams. This is not sensible. After all, beverage containers can serve as a resource for making new products when they're recycled rather than tossed. TCE is working with diverse allies to pass legislation that will add Texas to the ten

states with deposit laws that provide a 5¢ or 10¢ refund for each bottle or can you recycle. These states experience dramatically higher recycling rates—averaging 75%—than those without such policies. SB 1119 by Sen. Rodney Ellis (D-Houston) and HB 2114 by Rep. Garnet Coleman (D-Houston) would spur economic growth and create jobs in the recycling-related industries of Texas.

TCEQ SUNSET REFORM

Our state environmental agency, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), is currently undergoing its “Sunset Review” process in which legislators examine thoroughly the adequacy and efficiency of its operations. This yet-to-be-filed bill will contain numerous provisions that change the way TCEQ conducts its business. Because Sunset legislation *must* pass in order for an agency to continue to exist, TCE plans to work hard to infuse the bill with meaningful environmental reforms and to fend off regressive, polluter-friendly provisions.

MERCURY-CONTAINING PRODUCT TAKEBACK

Household products such as thermostats and fluorescent lighting contain small amounts of mercury. Currently, only limited recycling options exist in Texas. Rep. Alma Allen (D-Houston) has filed HB 695, which would provide producer takeback for mercury-containing thermostats. HB 1811, by Lon Burnam (D-Ft. Worth) would do the same for compact fluorescent lights.

 JEFFREY JACOBY, TCE METROPLEX

TAKE ACTION

FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY

TELL YOUR STATE
LAWMAKERS TO
SUPPORT THESE
BILLS TODAY!

TAKE ACTION:
www.texasenvironment.org

E-WASTE & E-CYCLING UPDATES


Today's technology dazzles. But like with most things, not all that glitters is gold. TCE is working on a variety of fronts to push the electronics industry to innovate in ways that are healthier for people and the planet.

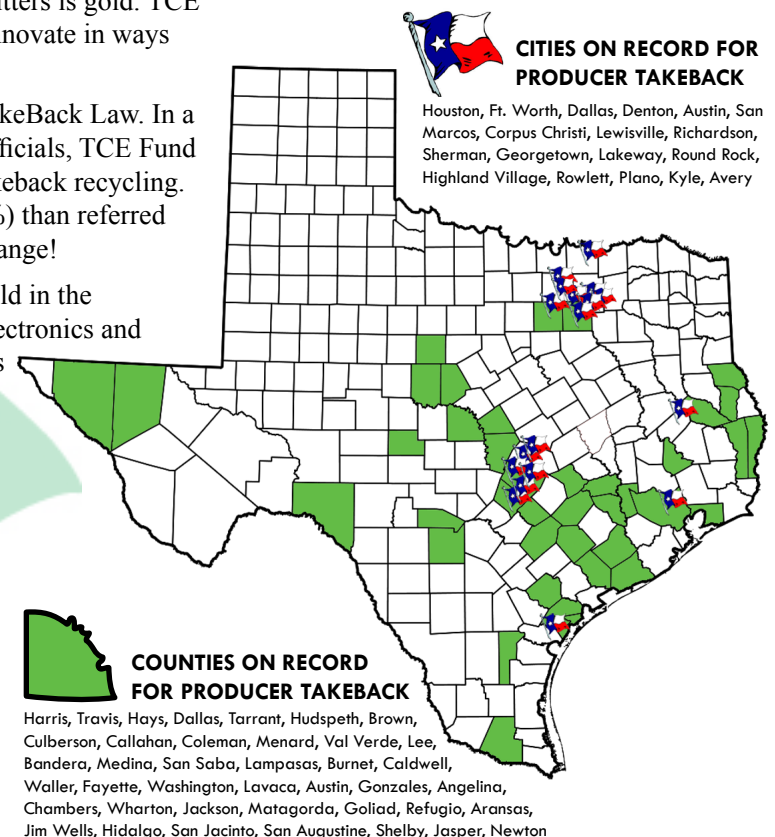
TCE Fund recently completed two reports on the Texas Computer TakeBack Law. In a survey of two hundred local government websites and calls to city officials, TCE Fund found that most municipalities are still in the dark about producer takeback recycling. More city officials told callers to put their computer in the trash (41%) than referred them to producer takeback programs (26%). Clearly, this needs to change!

The other report found that the law has not created a level playing field in the producer takeback arena. Four companies—Dell, Samsung, Altex Electronics and Sony—accounted for over 92% of the e-waste collected by producers in 2010. Furthermore, the results in Texas (0.97 lbs. per person) are much lower than in states with stronger laws, which see companies collect more than 6 lbs. per person. You can find more details or download the full reports at www.texasenvironment.org/fund.

Also in 2010, TCE and our national allies hailed the introduction of legislation designed to stop the toxic global e-waste trade by sham recyclers. U.S. Representatives Gene Green (D-Houston) and John Carter (R-Round Rock) are two of the three original co-sponsors. Look for similar legislation to be introduced in 2011.

TCE has been working with cities and counties across Texas to support e-waste recycling. If you can help get your city or county pass a resolution in favor of producer takeback, please contact us!

 ROBIN SCHNEIDER, TCE AUSTIN



SUSTAINABLE GRASSROOTS SUPPORT

As the office manager/seasoned canvasser at TCE Houston, I can tell you that pounding the pavement for the cause is no cool summer breeze—especially here in the Sun Belt. Doing this work requires determination of steel (recycled steel that is) and an enlightened view of the bigger picture.

Our organization's success depends first and foremost on my ability to truly motivate you in just five minutes. By cheerfully knocking on just one more door (through a rare snowstorm, 100-degree heat and hoards of angry dogs), I find those of you who will not only listen but will write a check, write letters and help hold our fire under the feet of the powerful.




Please know that it's you, the smiling supporter, just as much as the victories, the actual laws, policies, resolutions—the real change—that fuels my fire and our campaigns. Thank you!

 PHIL HUFFELDT, TCE HOUSTON

TCE is dedicated to stretching your dollars to ensure that more goes directly into our award-winning grassroots campaigns to create sustainable environmental and economic policies. Our financial statement is below.




Where we got the funding in 2010

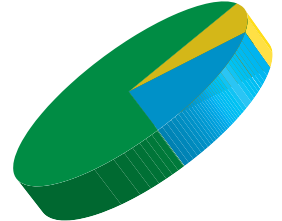
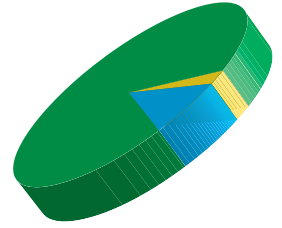
Income Total: \$1,551,882

-  90% Grassroots contributions from over 60,000 Texans
-  8% Special projects funding
-  2% Reimbursed expenses, miscellaneous

How we used the funding in 2010

Expense Total: \$1,468,335

-  73% Environmental advocacy, organizing & education for over 600,000 Texans
-  17% Managing TCE
-  10% Fundraising to sustain TCE



SOURCE: TCE FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2010



**TEXAS CAMPAIGN
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

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TCE ANNUAL MEETING & GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY DAY



TCE Annual Meeting
Sunday, April 3rd, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Join the TCE Staff and Board—and Rowdy the Rhinoceros—for our Annual Members Meeting at the Texas Disposal Systems landfill and exotic game ranch in Southeast Travis County. On April 3rd, we'll meet for a potluck lunch and a tour of the TDS landfill, composting and recycling facilities...and, of course, a visit with Rowdy and his wild animal friends. See www.texasenvironment.org for directions.



TCE Grassroots Advocacy Day
Monday, April 4th, All Day

On April 4th, we invite you to the Capitol in Austin as TCE visits the offices of all 181 Texas state legislators. When the people speak, the elected officials usually listen. Now, when the people travel from all over the state to speak directly with politicians in their Capitol offices...well, that's a recipe for *real* progress. You can register for our Grassroots Advocacy Day by visiting www.texasenvironment.org.