

Opposing Class VI Primacy in Texas:

CO₂ Injection Program to be Handed Over from EPA to Railroad Commission of Texas

In June, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published notice of rulemaking that marks their intent to hand off control of their authority (or primacy) over permanent injection of CO₂ as a climate change solution over to the state's oil and gas agency, the Railroad Commission of Texas. This EPA notice starts a "countdown clock" for the rulemaking process, which also requires opportunity for public input.

Underground injection of CO₂ for permanent storage is an expensive, energy-intensive, and largely unproven technology that puts underground sources of water at risk for contamination. We oppose the handover from EPA to the Railroad Commission of Texas.

The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) has demonstrated a consistently poor record of environmental oversight of existing oil, gas, and carbon dioxide injection wells, leading to hundreds of thousands of unplugged and orphaned wells which already leak and threaten groundwater supplies. Allowing RRC to administer the program for CO₂ injection wells presents a new risk to communities' drinking water, among other grave community and worker safety concerns.

If primacy is granted to RRC, current and future underground sources of drinking water will be in danger of contamination beyond human use and project costs and risks will far outweigh positive climate benefits.

TAKE ACTION! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is collecting public comments and hosting at least one virtual hearing about whether to grant primary authority over carbon injection projects to the Railroad Commission of Texas, the state oil and gas agency. We would like to generate a public comment to EPA, urging them to reject the Railroad Commission's application for carbon storage primacy. The EPA is accepting public comments until July 31, 2025, and the virtual hearing is scheduled for July 24 from 5–8pm Central Time.

ACTION OPTIONS:

1. [Sign our petition](#) opposing TX primacy, if you haven't already.
2. [Click here](#) to send a written comment into the EPA docket — we have draft language that you can customize.
3. [Register here](#) to attend the virtual EPA hearing on July 24 and make a short, spoken comment — we can help you with talking points! [Let us know here](#) that you're planning to attend, and we'll reach out to help you craft a statement.
4. [Sign up here](#) to receive a call or email from Clean Water staff to learn about more ways you can get involved around these issues.

Houston Flood Money Flowing Through Wrong Pipelines



▲ Protesters hold signs at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, when Houston Mayor John Whitmire met with Scott Turner, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

PHOTO: DOMINIC ANTHONY WALSH/HOUSTON PUBLIC MEDIA

Houston Mayor John Whitmire attempted to allocate zero of the \$314 million federal disaster recovery dollars that was sent to repair homes damaged and still in disrepair from two named storms in 2024 — Hurricane Beryl and the Derecho. Concerned residents, advocates, and activists were outraged and, after significant public pushback, a revised proposal now dedicates \$50 million towards the needed \$250 million assessed for home repairs from the storms. Residents continue to push for more with a demand that \$115 million of the total be directed toward the housing repair and replacement needs. Clean Water Action supports demands for fair use of disaster recovery funds for housing repair needs and future flood mitigation in our historically underserved neighborhoods, whose drainage infrastructure leads to repeat flooding, damage, inequitable health outcomes, and reduced property values and quality of life.

Houston CERAWeek

Members and supporters of Clean Water Action joined a recent rally calling for the end of our collective planetary reliance on fossil fuels. The rally was held in Houston during the annual “Superbowl” of the oil and gas industry leaders. Each spring, thousands of representatives from 89 countries — including top officials from 25 countries and over 450 C-suite executives — convene in Houston at a meeting known as CERAWeek to showcase technologies that prolong reliance on fossil fuel burning and cause further climate damage. Groups and individuals gathered in solidarity to call on regulators, elected officials, industry leaders, and one another to shift to renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, and just transitions away from fossil fuels. The photo above was included with front page coverage in the Houston Chronicle.

Participants in CERA week are often innovators in fields of technology that we consider “false solutions” to climate change, such as carbon capture, use, and storage (CCUS). When the same companies who are awarded millions of



▲ Clean Water Action joined other fossil fuel protesters in Houston for a rally in March.

dollars to sequester carbon are the same players making money on production and sale of fossil fuels, we suspect “greenwashing” is at play. Greenwashing is, among other things, a business practice or model that creates a false public-facing façade of positive environmental impact, while still contributing to or profiting from practices that harm the planet.

Legislative Update

The Texas Legislature wrapped up its 89th session on June 2nd. It was, as always, a slow build to a frenzied finish. From environmental protections to classroom behavior to landowner rights, oil field blowouts, and so much more, few areas of Texans' lives and livelihoods went untouched. Of the 9,240 bills filed (including both House and Senate bills as well as joint and concurrent resolutions), there were 1,317 sent to the Governor's desk.

Clean Water Action and our environmental allies view the 89th session as, on balance, positive. We held off efforts to make the most deep and devastating cuts to renewable energy buildout. We also pushed for and succeeded in helping get positive amendments to improve the big water bill package, which will devote \$20 billion over the next twenty years to water infrastructure (if approved on the statewide ballot in November of 2025 — stay tuned for updates on the ballot initiative for fall 2025).

Water made plenty of splashes in this 89th Texas Legislature including the early-introduced packages House Joint Resolution 7 ([HJR 7](#)) (Cody Harris) and Senate Bill 7 ([SB 7](#)) (Charles Perry). HJR 7 will dedicate an unprecedented, regular amount of funding over 20 years if passed by voters statewide in November. Fifty percent of the monies would be used to develop new water supplies for Texas, and the other half would be used for projects such wastewater facilities, repairs to existing infrastructure, flood prevention, and more through the existing Texas Water Development Board.

SB 7 supports HJR 7, laying out further detail about how the water funds would be allocated. It includes provisions that Clean Water Action and many allies pushed hard to make happen: to expand the definition of “new” water supplies to encompass previously lost gallons to leaking and inefficient pipes, as well as water recovered from reuse projects. Unfortunately, other considerations for “new” water supplies include ocean desalination projects that lack the highest degree of consideration for nearby bays and estuaries, new reservoirs (often not the most efficient strategies in hot or arid climates), and injection of oil and gas wastewater into rivers and underground water supplies. We testified “on” this bill, which means neither for nor against, but with recommendations for improvements.

There were some good bills that didn't make it through, and some not-so-good bills that did. Please read our [blog post here](#) for a breakdown of the major environmental bills during this session.

We are grateful for our many partners, including member organizations of the [Alliance for a Clean Texas](#) among others, and for the work of the elected officials and hundreds of staff members who make the legislative process happen. Finally, we would not have meaningful standing or grassroots power without you, our members and supporters here in Texas. Many thanks to you for powering our “strength in numbers” machine!

► *In March, Clean Water Action's Texas Director, Becky Smith, delivers testimony during the 89th Texas Legislature on water infrastructure priorities.*



Drastic Budget Cuts Would Put Clean Water at Risk

The Trump administration's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget proposal threatens to eliminate critical State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) under the Clean Water Act — putting public health, environmental protection, and local economies at serious risk. These grants fund essential state programs that monitor water quality, control pollution, issue permits, and support community-led restoration. Without this funding, many states report they would be forced to shut down core clean water operations, lay off staff, and abandon key projects that protect drinking water, prevent harmful algal blooms, and ensure safe rivers and lakes. Clean Water Action has urged Congress to reject this proposal and is partnering with fellow advocacy groups to educate lawmakers on its harmful consequences. Learn more about potential impacts of the White House budget proposal [here](#).

Clean Water Action has been monitoring the reconciliation Bill H.R. 1 (the “Big Beautiful Bill”), which would gut essential protections for our water and communities. This legislation slashes funding for coastal resilience, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) facilities, and environmental justice programs. These are vital investments that safeguard drinking water, protect vulnerable communities, and prepare for climate impacts. It strips away the regulatory tools needed to prevent pollution and hold polluters accountable. We need bold, equitable action to protect clean water, not rollbacks that put public health and our environment at risk.

Around Town: Source Water Collaborative Member Meeting

Source Water Collaborative's Co-Chairs Lynn Thorp (Clean Water Action) and Deirdre White (Association of State Drinking Water Administrators) welcomed attendees to the annual Source Water Collaborative Member Meeting on June 17. This hybrid gathering brought together 31 national organizations to give updates, exchange ideas, and advance the shared goal of protecting America's drinking water at the source.

Toxic Chemicals:

EPA Should Do More — Not Less — to Keep PFAS Chemicals Out of Our Water

In April 2024, Clean Water Action applauded EPA for finalizing drinking water limits for six of the notorious per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) chemicals. PFAS are widely used chemicals that are highly persistent in the environment, have been found in drinking water sources nationwide, and are known to cause serious health problems. Yet this May, EPA announced plans that it would reconsider these Safe Drinking Water Act limits for four PFAS chemicals and delay protections for two more. Clean Water Action [released a statement](#) opposing weakening these health-based drinking water limits and urging EPA to accelerate Clean Water Act pollution limits and other initiatives that would keep PFAS out of our water and the environment in the first place.

These are examples of why we must urge our representatives not to cut EPA's budget or weaken our environmental and health safeguards.

[***Take action today!***](#)

Celebrating \$1 million in micro-donations!



Clean Water Fund's long-running partnership with SurveyMonkey's Contribute program recently passed a major milestone: \$1 million donated to Clean Water Fund, and counting. One powerful demonstration of what we mean when we talk about “strength in numbers.”

You can help speed us on our way toward a second \$1 million. Just join the almost half-million others who have signed up to take surveys benefiting Clean Water Fund.

Learn more at
[**cleanwater.org/surveys**](https://cleanwater.org/surveys)