



**Public Input of Julie Range
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Railroad Commission of Texas Open Meeting
March 26, 2025**

Good Morning. I'm Julie Range, the Policy Manager of Commission Shift. Commission Shift met with a small community in Dimmit County a couple of weeks ago and learned that they are having serious municipal water system problems. Leaks have sprung up across the entire water system, which could be from soil shifting. This could be due to drought or perhaps underground injection, which we know can cause sinkholes. This town is within a few miles of two Class II disposal wells. Drilling is happening within 20 yards of peoples' homes, and some foundations have cracked. The water problems are so bad that their population has dwindled from 2,500 to 500 in the past four years.

Having to refill water containers in town is cumbersome and stressful. It's hard for elderly people to carry containers to and from their homes. The community is frustrated and concerned that their problems stem from oil and gas operations around them since many of these problems started around the time oil and gas operations increased in the area

The Railroad Commission is focused on economic development, but economic development doesn't have to come with these results. With more foresight and care, this agency could focus on ways to improve lives without adding costs and burdens to everyday families.

We want an agency that supports people who are affected by these industries, but often it seems you treat these community problems as a cost of doing business that is necessary for economic development, except these communities are the ones paying the cost.

The people experiencing damages have very little access to the Commission and do not consent to these damages. Many have Spanish language needs, lack internet access, and live paycheck to paycheck—making a trip to Austin, or a lawyer, unaffordable.

When Commission Shift visited this community, they had questions about which agencies they should contact about their cracked foundations or the sinkholes they believe are related to hydraulic fracturing or underground injection. Is the Railroad Commission the right agency to refer these community members to with complaints about cracked foundations or sinkholes? If not, how can their problems be addressed?

Commission Shift would sincerely appreciate answers to these questions, and I think it would be helpful for the agency to work on how to make themselves more accessible and responsive to impacted communities as a part of the FY 2026 Monitoring and Enforcement Plan.