



 COMMISSION SHIFT

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IMPACT REPORT

Reforming Oil & Gas Oversight in Texas

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LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

VIRGINIA PALACIOS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMISSION SHIFT

In January, President Trump issued an executive order halting federal work on environmental justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Some members in the Department of Energy's Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration (CCUS) Task Force, where I serve, immediately suggested removing references to environmental justice from the report. Though disappointing, I stood firm for an honest reflection of our research and current policy realities. "Stand your ground" became a guiding principle for Commission Shift and the many community members we worked alongside this year.

Texas' energy landscape is shifting. Some new sources reduce pollution, while others remain harmful. More importantly, our governance processes must be modernized not only to prevent harm, but also to ensure that impacted communities achieve justice when harm occurs. This year, Commission Shift launched a strategic planning process, updating our vision and mission statements to reflect that commitment.

VISION **A just world free from pollution.**

MISSION **Commission Shift is a Texas-based public advocacy organization transforming our state oil and gas agency by working with and for the people of Texas to create pathways for shared governance.**

Impacted communities remain at the heart of our work. We brought 55 constituents to the Texas Capitol to share their stories with lawmakers. After four years of Commission Shift educating the Legislature, the state passed Senate Bill 1150 (SB 1150), strengthening well plugging requirements so more operators pay to plug their own wells instead of leaving costs to the public. This would not have happened without Commission Shift.

I am most energized by the communities we have inspired to stand their ground. In East Texas, Texas Legacy Defense — modeled after Commission Shift — is challenging waste pit permits and pressing the Railroad Commission (RRC) to respond to community concerns about industry influence. In the Panhandle, residents have organized after wildfires that burned 1,500 square miles of rangeland and exposed the dangers of abandoned wells.

Many Texans still fear speaking out against the oil and gas industry. Commission Shift's steady presence and principled action are replacing that fear with confidence, showing that thoughtful and persistent advocacy works.

Looking ahead, we're leading a working group to ensure community participation in implementing SB 1150, expanding engagement with communities affected by flaring, and studying produced water as the industry promotes "beneficial reuse" as a drought solution. In 2026, we'll begin preparing for the Railroad Commission's Sunset Review in 2028.

Together, we are standing our ground for a just, accountable Texas — and for the climate we all share.



TURNING THE TIDE

IN PECOS COUNTY



A RANCHER'S DECADE-LONG BATTLE AGAINST ILLEGAL OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS

Laura Briggs and her family originally moved to Pecos County for the chance to raise their family surrounded by long stretches of land, animals, and the Pecos River winding through the arid landscape. But in 2013, she discovered **the operators on her land were defrauding investors by drilling wells they never intended to produce oil from**. While they were using the leases, their physical operations were dangerous, illegal, and damaging. Laura also found out that despite holding expired leases, the operators were permitted to drill by the Railroad Commission. "What I discovered is that our Texas oil and gas regulatory agency, the Railroad Commission, is not very good at regulation, and operates more directly as a hard-to-navigate permit-issuing agency that keeps records," Laura said.



Laura Briggs with a friend on her ranch.



Sunset on Laura Briggs' ranch in Pecos County.

AS GOES TEXAS, SO GOES THE NATION

Laura's oil and gas trouble is just one story of many from across the state, where Texans are living with contaminated water, unstable ground beneath their homes, harmful emissions in the air, and rising energy bills they can't predict or afford.

Few places on Earth shape global energy and global emissions the way Texas does. Empowering communities that experience the impacts of energy development firsthand is the key to creating necessary policy change, both locally and nationally.

TURNING POINT

A turning point came in Laura's fight, according to her, with increasing media coverage — and support from Commission Shift.

"When you are battling with an entity as big as the Texas government, and time and effort are limited, a responsive organizational group that can help you is invaluable. (This support) empowers regular people to speak up with more confidence and easily share resources with others to gain traction."

— Laura Briggs

Commission Shift's commitment to helping Texans navigate the Railroad Commission and the State Legislature is turning the tide — not just in individual's lives, but also in global climate goals. Harm from weak oil and gas policies may start in Texas, but Texans taking interest, getting involved, and working together is how we solve it.

LEARN AT THE LEGE & CAPITOL VISIT

EDUCATION AND PRESENCE PAY OFF AT THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE



Commission Shift hosted a briefing for legislative staff on Tuesday, January 28th at the Capitol. More than 40 attendees learned about the role the 89th Legislative Session could play in eliminating orphaned wells across the state of Texas. A month later, on February 27th and 28th, Commission Shift also hosted a Capitol Visit for more than 55 participants from across the state to learn and share stories with their representatives about their experiences with oil and gas development. For many attendees, it was their first time walking the halls of the Capitol as advocates. By the end of the Legislative Session, **SB 1150 passed with near unanimous votes in both chambers**, requiring operators to pay to plug their own inactive wells in a timely manner and laying the groundwork for the Railroad Commission to hire 40 new field inspectors.

40

LEARN AT THE LEGE ATTENDEES

55

CAPITOL VISIT ATTENDEES



Attendees at the Texas Capitol during our Capitol Visit.

SPEAK UP FOR CLEAN WATER

PRIMACY TOWN HALLS



6,000+

NEWSLETTER SIGN-UPS

1,200+

PETITION SIGNATURES

When the EPA announced its public comment period on giving primary oversight authority or “primacy” over Class VI carbon injection wells in Texas, Commission Shift and our allies with the Texas Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Community Advocacy Coalition mobilized to host six town halls across the state. Primacy would give the Railroad Commission sweeping control over Class VI wells — power that directly affects drinking water, community safety, and whether carbon projects are rushed forward with little oversight. During these town halls, more than 150 attendees prepared comments to the EPA, urging them to deny the Railroad Commission’s bid for primacy. **For many Texans, it was their first time submitting a federal public comment — an experience that turned concern into confidence and neighbors into advocates.** Commission Shift produced several resources providing an overview of carbon capture and storage technology and why the Railroad Commission shouldn’t be trusted to oversee CCS buildout in Texas. We also created short videos telling the stories of those directly impacted by oil and gas development in their communities. The response was overwhelming: we received 6,000 new newsletter subscribers, and our petition to the EPA received over 1,200 signatures.

SHIFTING THE CONVERSATION



Commission Shift continues to be a trusted, leading voice on the Railroad Commission and oil and gas issues in Texas. We achieve this through research, publishing blogs, pitching content, and maintaining regular contact with reporters – ultimately reaching audiences across Texas and the nation, and helping Texans learn about energy issues and take meaningful action.

32

PRESS RELEASES, BLOGS, & PUBLIC APPEARANCES (2025)

49

STATEWIDE AND NATIONAL NEWS HITS (2025)

REMOTE ACCESS & INTERPRETATION AT THE RAILROAD COMMISSION

For the past year, Commission Shift has been asking the Railroad Commission to allow Texans to give public input at Railroad Commission Open Meetings via phone or video call, and supporters like you called for remote and more accessible public input options in sign-ons and letters. At the October 28th Open Meeting, Railroad Commission staff announced that the agency will hold 90-minute Listening Sessions with the public every other month, providing a pathway for more Texans to share their experiences. Texans in oil- and gas-producing regions live hours from Austin, and many can't miss work or travel to testify in person – making remote access essential for real participation. While we believe the Railroad Commission can and should do more to expand remote public input opportunities at their monthly open meetings, **these Listening Sessions mark a new and meaningful shift in an opaque agency that the public often finds hard to reach.**



TEXAS FLARING PROJECT



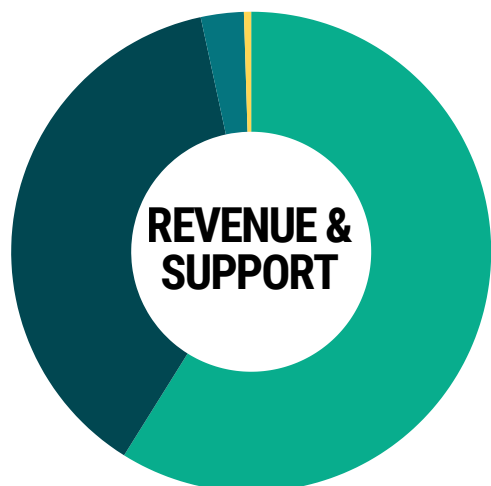
Our new flaring report and accompanying website, TexasFlaringProject.org, shed light on flaring waste and emissions in Texas. These resources are relied upon by everyday Texans seeking accountability, journalists telling the story of their communities, and decision-makers shaping energy policy. Visitors can explore interactive data, track trends, and learn how flaring affects their communities, turning information into action. In the spirit of public governance, **TexasFlaringProject.org** provides the data and guidance Texans need to advocate for cleaner, safer environments.

FINANCIAL PICTURE



The generosity of our funders and partners continues to power Commission Shift's mission to advance responsible energy oversight and protect communities, water, and natural resources in Texas. Their support ensures we can respond to urgent needs while planning for long-term impact.

Our revenue comes from a balanced mix of supporters who understand Texas's outsized role in the global energy landscape. The chart below reflects the composition of our 2025 revenue – unrestricted contributions, restricted contributions, individual giving, and other support – each contributing to a future where Texas drives global climate progress.

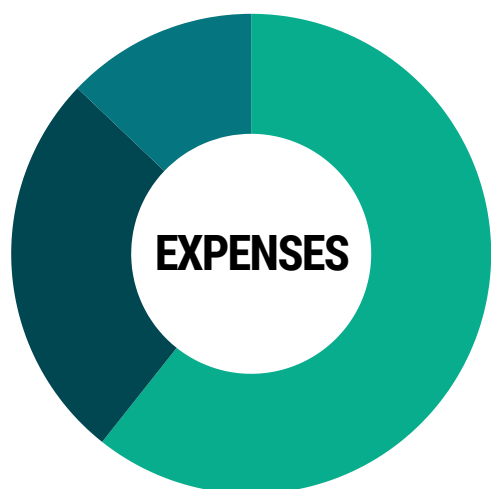


- Unrestricted Contributions (58.9%)
- Restricted Contributions (37.7%)
- Individual Giving (2.9%)
- Other Revenue (<1%)

Total: \$1,545,369

INVESTING IN IMPACT

Most of our resources go directly to program services: engaging communities, educating the public, overseeing policy, and ensuring energy systems operate responsibly. Expenses are allocated across three categories:



- Mission (60.7%)
- Management & General (26.5%)
- Fundraising (12.9%)

Total: \$1,221,314

We uphold the highest standards of accountability and financial stewardship. To review our audited financial statements and Form 990, visit linktr.ee/2025ImpactReport.

OUR PATH FORWARD

PRESSURE INTO PROGRESS

Progress in Texas isn't accidental. It's built — conversation by conversation, community by community.



This year showed us again and again that meaningful change in Texas happens when communities stand their ground together. From town halls to the Capitol, from remote rural counties to hearing rooms in Austin, Texans showed up with clarity, courage, and determination. Because of you, we strengthened oversight, pushed back on risky carbon injection plans, won new avenues for public participation, and elevated stories that would have otherwise been ignored. **Your presence turned pressure into progress.**

As we look ahead, we know the path forward is powered not just by policy, but by people. Every meeting, every comment, every shared story adds up to a groundswell that decision-makers can no longer avoid. With your continued support, Commission Shift will keep showing up — shoulder to shoulder with communities — ensuring Texas moves towards transparency, accountability, and a future where our shared resources are protected.

***Together, we are building
the Texas we deserve.***

