

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Contact:       Cyrus Reed, 512-740-4086, [cyrus.reed@sierraclub.org](mailto:cyrus.reed@sierraclub.org)  
                  Ken Kramer, 512-626-4204, [kenwkramer@aol.com](mailto:kenwkramer@aol.com)  
                  Matt Johnson, 773-259-5011, [matt.johnson@sierraclub.org](mailto:matt.johnson@sierraclub.org)

**Sierra Club Testifies in Senate Finance Committee on Water, Railroad Commission, TCEQ Budgets**

Austin, TX - The Texas Senate Finance Committee took testimony on budgets for several agencies including the Texas Water Development Board, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and the Railroad Commission.

**Staff and volunteers with the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter issued the following statements:**

Ken Kramer, Water Resources Chair of Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter on TWDB and TCEQ

"In a legislative session dominated by hot-button issues and fiscal challenges, legislators need to remember the critical role that water plays in sustaining our state's economy and environment. As the Senate Finance Committee reviews funding for natural resource agencies today, the Sierra Club urges the Senate budget writers to provide the funding necessary for TCEQ and the Water Development Board to protect and conserve Texas water resources and sustain the rivers and coastal bays that are an economic driver for the state."

Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director of the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter, on RRC

"Thousands of Texans know the Railroad Commission of Texas is broken and needs more inspectors — at least 55 - to be able to inspect wells and pipelines, and an updated database to allow the public to actually see how these companies are performing. That is why we agree with the agency on their exceptional item request for 55 new inspectors, and \$3 million to finally upgrade their failed inspection, enforcement and complaint databases."

Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director of the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter, on TCEQ

"With new clean air standards, cutting the money in the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan — which helps clean up dirty diesel vehicles — is not the right move, especially with more than \$200 million a year generated by Texans each year to go into the TERP account. In addition, the Legislature must find more revenue from water quality and permitting fees to properly fund the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to be able to enforce drinking water and water quality standards, especially with new federal regulations on lead, copper, and total coliform bacteria."

Evelyn Merz, Conservation Chair of the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter, on Texas Parks & Wildlife

“The Sierra Club encourages the Senate Finance Committee to support Texas Parks and Wildlife’s request for base and exceptional item funding. In particular, we encourage full appropriation of development funds to open state parks now closed to the public and for the legislature to grant a minimal appropriation to TPWD to acquire land on the borders of existing state parks. The 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature wisely funded a major initiative by TPWD to control invasive aquatic species. The Sierra Club requests full funding of TPWD’s FY2018-19 request to continue this vital work to protect aquatic habitat and infrastructure.”

*About the Sierra Club*

*The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 2.4 million members and supporters. In addition to helping people from all backgrounds explore nature and our outdoor heritage, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org).*

###