



**ARTICLE III, TEES – Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES)
RESTORE FULL FUNDING TO ENERGY SYSTEMS LABORATORY BY
PROVIDING \$1 MILLION OVER BIENNIUM IN ADDITIONAL TERP
FUNDING**

From: Cyrus Reed, Interim Director, Lone Star Chapter,
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To: The Honorable Greg Bonnen, Chair, Appropriations
The Honorable Terry Wilson, Chair, Article III Subcommittee
The Honorable Erin Zwiener, Vice-Chair, Article III
Members, Article III Subcommittee

**Sierra Club Comments on proposed budget for Energy Systems
Laboratory**

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**GETTING PROPER CREDIT IN TEXAS FOR OUR EFFORTS TO
IMPROVE AIR QUALITY & REBUILDING SMART & RESILIENT IN
TEXAS**

Under Chapter 386 of the Health and Safety Code, the Energy Systems Laboratory, a unit of the Texas A & M Engineering Experiment Station, is charged with being the state's analyst for most of our utility, state and local government energy efficiency programs, as well as the analyst of the positive impacts of new energy codes for construction. Thus, ESL

measures both the energy and money savings from these programs, as well as the benefits due to reduced air pollution.

These reports on building energy codes, energy efficiency programs and renewable energy development are of great benefit to our non-attainment areas to get credit for reducing ground-level ozone pollution like Dallas, Houston, Galveston and Fort Worth. The calculations are delivered to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency as part of our “weight of evidence” on how we will lower our ozone levels and comply with tough science-based health standards. This same analysis also assist near non-attainment areas like San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Waco, Austin and El Paso as they come with strategies to avoid being classified as non-attainment areas.

ESL also plays a key role in assessing efforts to adopt new building codes, and helping builders comply with the codes. This is particularly important as we rebuild post-Harvey. Texas just updated our codes to 2015 energy codes and ESL played a key role. In the wake of the Polar Vortex, the benefits of modern codes became apparent to millions of Texans last week.

The money for ESL to perform these tasks comes out of the Texas Emissions Reductions Plan account (Account 5071). In practice, ESL's budget has been cut in half in recent years, from \$952,000 in 2009 and 2010, to only \$452,000 since, and is now proposed for \$421,384. Separately, they have maintained a contract with TCEQ for one study on renewable energy that has been funded at the same amount for a decade. This has had a direct impact on the breadth of the reports, as well as their ability to assist local governments in coming up with energy efficiency building codes.

With the State of Texas now having three non-attainment areas -- San Antonio, Dallas and Houston -- out of compliance with EPA ozone standards, as well as problems in Waco, El Paso and other areas, we need to fully fund the ESL, either through a contract with the TCEQ out of the Trust Fund for TERP or out of the TERP Account 5071 which has about \$2.1 billion dollars available.

Recommendation: Add a rider to appropriate an additional \$500,000 per year for ESL to fulfil their statutory responsibilities under TERP and the Building Code Standards.