

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Statement of Cyrus Reed, Sierra Club Conservation Director, on Defeat of HB 3123 Conference Committee Report Keeping Railroad Commission Sunset in 2017

AUSTIN, Texas – On the penultimate day of the 84th Texas Legislature, a controversial change to HB 3123, which would have delayed full Sunset Review of the Railroad Commission of Texas until 2023, was defeated in the House by a vote of 90-52. The House agreed instead to pass the Senate version of the bill, which did not include the delay in Railroad Commission Sunset review.

The agency in charge of regulating oil and gas activity in Texas is due for a full-scale review, as all state agencies are required to do, in 2017. The Legislature failed to pass a Sunset reform bill for the Commission in 2011 and 2013.

Sierra Club learned of the attempt to further delay Railroad Commission Sunset Review late Friday. On Saturday, Sierra Club staff learned that it was Sunset staff that initiated the last-minute change to the legislation.

In response to this development, **Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director of Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter**, issued the following statement:

“Sierra Club is thankful and relieved that the House defeated the Conference Committee Report and went back to the less controversial bill as it passed the Senate. It means that the Railroad Commission will be under the scrutiny it deserves next session.

Now that we know it was Sunset staff that pushed the date change, we still consider the move dirty pool, but regret the use of the word “cowardly” to describe the actions of Conference Committee Report chairs Sen. Jane Nelson and Rep. Four Price. We realize that the last days of session are hectic, and we can sympathize with members who struggle, as we do, to keep up with the flurry of activity. A proposed delay like this, however, for such a critical agency, was never brought up in hearings or public deliberation and should have been rejected in conference committee.

Texans who want to make our state a better place to live should be thankful that the right decision was made in the end.”

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