

Listening Session-20261013_160046UTC-Meeting Recording

October 13, 2026, 4:00PM

34m 53s

BD **Bryce Dubee** 0:05

Good morning, my name is Bryce Dubee.

I'm the RRC agency spokesperson and I will be your host for today's event.

Today's the schedule for today's session will start with a brief presentation on RSC jurisdiction and then move into our public comment and Q&A period.

Before we begin, just take a little bit of housekeeping for those of you who are joining us online. As you may have noticed, when you logged on all participants cameras, microphones have been turned off. For those who have registered to provide.

Oops, excuse me.

Lost track of miles here for those who've registered to provide a comment or question later in the meeting. When we open our comments section, I will call you by name when it's time to speak and one of our staff will restore your microphone and camera after you've SPO.

Your microphone camera will be again turned off, and I would note if you don't want your camera on while speaking, that's totally fine as well.

All that we ask is that your comments and questions today be made in a respectful manner towards our staff and for all who are present here today.

At this time, I'd like to.

Introduce you to our subject matter experts who are representing the RRC.

And we'll take your feedback back to their respective offices.

And I hope there's the slide. So from oil and gas, you can see we've got Paul Dubois, Jared Blair, Shawn Avit from surface mining and reclamation.

We've got Katie Upham from the office of Communication and Office of Public Outreach.

We've got Madison Giorgito and Scott Shroff, and from oversight and safety, we've got Stephanie Weidman and.

Marzi bohasani.

And most importantly, we have all of you who've taken time out of your day to share your thoughts with us.

We thank you for joining us. Your interest in the RRC and we truly look forward to hearing from you.

I will now hand things over to Scott, who will provide a brief overview of the Commission.

Take it away, Scott.

KK Katherine Kopec 2:50

Hey Scott, I'm not sure if this is for everybody, but I cannot hear you.

Looks like it might be everybody.

BD Bryce Dubee 3:05

And I apologize for the technical issue, folks. You shot it to Scott.

We'll see if we can get.

Him up and running here with audio.

In the meantime, you can see on this slide.

Here is our jurisdiction for the areas that we cover, which include oil and gas exploration, production, alternative fuels, which include liquid natural gas, natural gas utilities, Interstate pipelines, safety critical infrastructure, coal and uranium surface mining.

As well.

Just kind of tapped into here for a second and we'll get these audio issues figured out and I will hand it back over to Scott as soon as you are ready, Sir.

OK.

Yeah, she Scott, I can hear you.

SS Scott Sroufe 4:20

OK, good.

Sounds great.

All right. Now we'll continue on here.

And when I put there we go.

There are some areas, though. There are often associated with the production of natural gas and oil that are not under our jurisdiction, and those things are.

Yeah.

No, I'm not moving. So sorry.

Can you stop sharing for a moment? Restart.

OK.

There we go.

I thought.

I do apologize for the technical difficulties.

Everything was set earlier and I don't know what happened here.

All right, there we go.

There are some things that are not under our jurisdiction, and those are roads and traffic. The siting of oil and gas facilities, including pipelines, noise, odors and lighting, mineral interest and leases, air quality and railroads.

The last of our railroad authority was transferred to the Texas Department of Transportation in 2005.

Texas is the largest producing largest producer of oil and gas in the nation.

We produce over 5.1 million barrels of oil each day and over 35.2 billion cubic feet of natural gas daily.

Oh, let's take a moment and talk about our regulatory divisions within the RRC. We have 4 regulatory divisions. The oil and Gas division, oversight and Safety division, Critical Infrastructure division and surface mining and Reclamation Division.

Beginning with our oil and gas division.

Our oil and gas division has three distinct departments.

Administrative compliance is pretty much the record keeping arm of the oil and gas division. They process organization reports for all operators working within the state. They also process drilling permits, production reports and other required forms.

Technical permitting is much like a good name implies.

It handles all technical permits, including Class 6 injection storage wells and other underground injection storage permits.

Waste and recycling permits and technical permitting also houses our geologic advisory unit, which works to protect our sources of underground drinking water field operations. As far the largest group within the oil and gas division and consists of staff across the state, in district offices who respond to Inc.

And complaints perform inspections and they also work in the areas of cleanup.

Site remediation and well plugging, our oversight and safety division.

Also has three distinct departments.

Pipeline safety inspectors do not only standard routine inspections, but also inspections, specialized inspections such as new construction inspections, pipeline integrity inspections and even drug and alcohol inspections of operator staff, just to

name a few.

Our pipeline safety inspectors are trained to the standards of the pipeline, hazardous Material Safety Administration, also known as FEMA, who regulates Interstate pipelines.

Our regulation of intrastate pipelines meets or exceeds FEMSA standards.

Our alternative Fuels Department works to ensure.

Provides training, testing, certification and licensing for employees within the alternative fuels industry.

Our alternative fuels inspectors inspect storage and dispensing facilities and they investigate incidents. Market oversight works to ensure that Texas have a continuous, safe supply of natural gas.

At the lowest, most reasonable cost, they review appeals on natural gas distribution company rate requests.

They administer the gas utility pipeline tax and they also perform gas utility audits like our oil and gas division.

We have 7 regional pipeline safety offices throughout the state so that we are ready and able to serve you another section within our pipeline, safety or oversight and safety division is our pipeline damage prevention team.

This team provides education and outreach to professional excavators and homeowners alike as they help prevent pipeline damage by calling 811 before any excavation begins, and they also process the reporting of any damage incidents.

Our Critical infrastructure division exists to ensure that an uninterruptible gas supply is available throughout the year, especially during time of energy emergencies.

They do this in three ways.

First, by ensuring that all natural gas suppliers who meet certain requirements for electrical production are designated as critical.

They also process reports of critical entities that include their operating procedures in case of a stoppage, and weatherization plans to prevent stoppages.

Finally, they do inspections to ensure that weatherization is in place.

Our inspectors will inspect over 7000 facilities.

Just for the winter season.

Our critical infrastructure inspectors work out of one of four regional critical infrastructure offices in the state surface mining and Reclamation Division truly lives out our mission of stewardship of natural resources and the environment.

They are responsible for both mining and reclamation permits, as well as inspections.

In Texas, we mine a lignite coal, which is primarily used for. Production of electricity. The abandoned line mine land program. Completes restoration and safety procedures on mines across the state that have been left to safety hazards. We currently have no accurate active uranium mines in Texas, but our team is involved in overseeing inspecting any exploration sites. Reclamation of mines takes former mining projects such as the Jewett Mine and Jewett, Texas, and turns them into usable land space, such as the Dewey Prairie. Garden, which now sits on approximately 10 acres of this former mine land and provides food for over 3000 residents in freestone and limestone counties. If you would like to know more about the activity of the Railroad Commission of Texas, we have several one page briefs at our website at www.rrctexas.gov. Please feel free to contact us at any time using any of the methods you see here. Turn it back over to you, Bryce. Thank you.

BD **Bryce Dubee** 12:12

Thank you, Scott.

We will now open the floor for your questions and comments.

I would ask that all comments be presented with dignity.

Respect courtesy for the Commission, agency staff and others.

Participants will have approximately 3 minutes to speak and if you exceed your time, you will be asked to quickly conclude your comments so that all registrants do have time to speak.

I will call participants by name.

Provide your comments as your name's called.

Please allow us just a moment to turn on your microphone. And again, you don't have to turn on.

Turn on your camera if you don't want to, but you will have the opportunity when your microphone.

And then they will be turned off at the conclusion of your comments.

If you do have a question or comment, you can click either the raise your hand button on teams and we can unmute you, or you can click the Q&A button up in the upper little bar and you'll you can type in a question, there will be.

Keeping an eye on both options and we'll try our best to ask them in order received.

And get in as many of them as we can.

I don't if we had anyone who registered in advance to speak.

I see one raised hand for Sarah Spikes.

Alright, we'll get you taken care of, Sarah. And go right ahead.

And you may have to unmute on your end as well.

We do like a setting thing here, just as a a thing, so maybe a click on your end and click after a click on our end.

SS **Sara Spikes** 13:49

Hi, can you hear me?

BD **Bryce Dubee** 13:50

Loud and clear.

SS **Sara Spikes** 13:51

OK.

Yes, I hope my 3 minutes just started.

I wasn't aware there was a time limit.

But OK.

I will try to be brief.

This is regarding several matters.

And it's relating to previous.

Testimony at the Railroad Commission back in September.

This is regarding the Rose.

Ccsi was present at that meeting to speak on that and I would like to.

I know it's rare.

For the Commission to allow.

Parties to speak during agenda item and I do appreciate it the the concern here though is that the Railroad Commission was submitted over 100 letters of concerns regarding regulatory framework for shared geological space as well as emergency planning that have not been responded to by our commun.

In Chief, Texas, Jefferson County.

Those are, I feel, are outstanding.

And that we need responses from this agency from some assurances. Also during that meeting, Chairman Craddock made a comment to Exxon, reprimanding them about not showing up and not coming to our community.

And that if we needed a that they need to be a part of our community and if we give

us information and if we needed anything, give us a fire truck if that's what we want. I appreciate those comments by her.

I appreciate the reprimand. The community appreciate appreciated the acknowledgement.

That when we wanted equal footing that they wanted that, that she acknowledged that. However, the fact that she went on ahead and approved instead of remanded it for them to come back and speak to us, that she lost her power in those words.

And I'll be honest, there was disappointment.

There were tears on the bus when we went home and there were some who felt that that, that that speech was performative. If she was just going to go ahead and.

Be one of the ones that approved it.

But also the fact that we felt, given the over 100 letters that was submitted, the fact that she even mentioned a fire truck with a slap on our face, given the fact that fire trucks are not designed to withstand CO2 emergencies. And so again it felt.

Like our voices, even though over 100 people submitted letters, our voices were still not heard in terms of the concerns in our Community.

Also I had.

Thankfully, I was afforded an opportunity to speak on the agenda.

But I was not able to. She blocked me from talking about the sunflower.

I know I'm running low on time, but that's also another CCS project impacting Chick residents because we got CO2 pipelines coming 0.6 miles from our children's schools. There has been no information by the operator.

I'm currently trying to push them to speak with the community about this in terms of safety, we have no idea about the safety and regulations regarding CO2 pipelines.

And there's also concerns about flood management. That area that those pipelines are in is a known flood zone.

And I'm not just talking about Harvey. Water sits there, and your agency came to us in November of 2024 and gave a presentation saying that one of the concerns about CO2 pipelines was that water could get into the pipelines. And given the fact that.

That is a known flood plain Liberty County they.

Release waters down on Harden County.

In that particular area, that water will sit there and it will. It'll infiltrate those pipelines and they will corrode.

Those are questions that we have.

BD Bryce Dubee 17:33

OK. And I appreciate your feedback if you have anything else you'd like to add, we have additional time here, the three minutes which is more off of the script and I know this is an important matter and that we we don't have a ton of registrants today.

So if there's anything else you'd like to add, feel free.

The floor is yours.

SS Scott Sroufe 17:50

Bryce, let me ask Sean Abbott a question here that may be able to help her understand what may be coming up with the Sunflower Project.

Sean, do you all have a public meeting scheduled for that project soon?

SA Sean Avitt 18:05

The sunflower project.

SS Scott Sroufe 18:06

Yes, Sir.

SA Sean Avitt 18:09

Yes, we do. I don't.

Have the.

Date in front of me, but let me see if I can pull that up.

SS Scott Sroufe 18:22

So there has not yet been a a public comment period. Sarah, on that particular project for sunflower.

But like Shawn said, we know that there is a meeting scheduled our our manager over that particular.

Project is out on another outreach event today, so he was unable to be here. But Shawn is over him and if he can get us a date that would be great.

If not, just know that there is an upcoming public comment period.

SS **Sara Spikes** 18:50

So.

SS **Scott Sroufe** 18:52

On that.

SS **Sara Spikes** 18:54

OK. Will this be before it goes to permit or will it be before?

SS **Scott Sroufe** 18:58

Yes. Yes, ma'am. Yes, it will be before it goes to permit.

SS **Sara Spikes** 19:00

I I think that's the concern. It will still be in draft form.

I think that's the clarity that we need.

SS **Scott Sroufe** 19:05

OK.

SA **Sean Avitt** 19:09

Yeah. I mean, the process is gonna be exactly the same.

You know it's it's we're following the rule and it will be notice of draft permit, the notice of draft permit I believe is the comment period's gonna start.

It's either tomorrow or the next day. I think is the plan.

SS **Sara Spikes** 19:32

So is that the notice that is up for approval?

I'm just trying to be clear.

Is it?

Notice that's up for approval, or it's because right now it's showing a website.

That is, it's a draft permit.

SA **Sean Avitt** 19:45

Right, yes.

SS Sara Spikes 19:46

It's in draft form.

SA Sean Avitt 19:46

So we we make notice of a draft permit and then we receive comments and you know we will issue the permit.

You know, this is basically notice of intent to issue the draft permit.

SS Sara Spikes 20:02

And that's coming up tomorrow.

SA Sean Avitt 20:05

I believe the the comment period will start. The publication is supposed to happen this week.

Think it's tomorrow.

SS Sara Spikes 20:12

OK.

So that's the concern is y'all are already intending to approve something, but not all the effective communities have been informed about this. And that is the concern that we have.

This is precisely why people get upset and push back.

It's because y'all already intended to do a permit and not all affected parties have even been notified.

And the Railroad Commission has not made the attempt to even come and talk to us about this.

SA Sean Avitt 20:37

So the the meeting, the public outreach meeting that Scott alluded to is also scheduled.

It happens during the public comment period so that people are notified and have an opportunity to provide comment. You know, at the same time when the comment period is open.

That's the sort of schedule that we have and that will happen. Let's see.

So the public meeting is is planned for.

November 9th. And then there. That's in person and then there will be a virtual component on the 10th and the public comment period closes is planned to close on November 28th.

SS **Sara Spikes** 21:21

OK.

So here's the question here.

Is the public comment going to be in Beaumont?

Is it gonna be local or are people gonna have to get up and drive three and four hours to Austin and miss work?

SA **Sean Avitt** 21:39

So the the in person.

Meeting is going to be in Nome, Texas and then like I said, there will be a virtual public meeting for those who would prefer to attend virtually.

SS **Sara Spikes** 21:54

So November 9th is gonna be the non Texas meeting and this is specific to what. I'm just trying to make.

SA **Sean Avitt** 22:03

That's that's for the Exxon Sunflower project.

SS **Sara Spikes** 22:05

That's for the Exxon Sunflower project, and that is that's public comment or is it?

SA **Sean Avitt** 22:13

Yeah, it's a public meeting to receive comments.

SS **Scott Sroufe** 22:14

Yes, ma'am.

SS **Sara Spikes** 22:17

Globic meeting to receive comments and is there a particular reason why Exxon is

not going beyond?

Known and going to other places like Sour Lake, Pine Island, Westberry back in cheek because that pipeline is passing right through cheek yet again and no one has come out here.

So I'm I'm just wondering how are y'all moving forward with this and they have not went to each affected area.

Where their project is running that pipeline is coming back through our community.

SA **Sean Avitt** 22:51

So I'm not.

I'm not familiar with the pipeline location that is associated with sunflower or or rose, but.

SS **Sara Spikes** 22:55

What shouldn't you be?

I mean this is your project, should you not be familiar with this?

I guess this is this is the concern that we have y'all are going to approve something.

You're not even familiar with the pipeline route.

I'm a Community member that have maps to back up that this pipeline that's coming through our community and you are not requesting the operator to come and talk to our community in person before y'all move forward with approval.

Is is am I getting this correct?

SA **Sean Avitt** 23:27

So. So I would like to finish my statement, if you wouldn't mind.

SS **Sara Spikes** 23:31

OK.

SA **Sean Avitt** 23:33

So.

The the public meeting, which is being held in GNOME, is held by the Commission and that is to receive public comment.

I am not familiar.

Like I said, with the pipeline location and the specific communities that you're saying

are affected.

And I am not familiar necessarily with what Exxon?

Has public outreach has done in those areas or not?

But what I can say is that we will receive public comment in on the 9th.

Virtually on the 10th, and that the public comment period begins on October 15th and ends on November 28th.

SS **Sara Spikes** 24:18

OK so.

October 15th is what date?

SA **Sean Avitt** 24:25

October 15th is Thursday.

SS **Sara Spikes** 24:27

And this is to announce that this permit goes to pre approval is that it?

SA **Sean Avitt** 24:35

It is to announce the notice of of draft permit.

SS **Sara Spikes** 24:39

OK.

So notice of draft permit is October.

15th November 9th is the public meeting that Exxon Sunflower will have.

SA **Sean Avitt** 24:45

Yes, ma'am.

Yes. So that meeting is being put on by the Commission to receive public comment for Exxon Sunflower.

SS **Sara Spikes** 24:59

So this is the railroad Commission is giving the November 9th meeting.

SA **Sean Avitt** 25:04

Yes.

SS **Sara Spikes** 25:06

OK and.

SA **Sean Avitt** 25:10

Yeah. And just to be clear, I'm only talking about, you know, the regulatory process that, that the Commission, you know, undertakes.

I'm not.

I'm not talking about exon in any activities. They may or may not have done. I don't. I don't know.

SS **Sara Spikes** 25:21

OK, OK. And so November 10th is the virtual piece, am I correct on that?

SA **Sean Avitt** 25:26

Yes, ma'am.

SS **Sara Spikes** 25:28

And then November 28th, what was that date again?

SA **Sean Avitt** 25:28

Yep.

That's when the public comment period closes.

SS **Sara Spikes** 25:35

OK. And then when the public comment period closes?

That's potentially where the notice of draft moves forward.

To approval, is that correct?

SA **Sean Avitt** 25:49

Yes. So we'll review any information, comments, protests that have been received, evaluate those and then we'll take the next steps.

SS **Sara Spikes** 26:00

OK.

So, OK, thank thank you for those dates. But I still just wanna go back about.

Rose briefly to inform sunflower because again.

Our community had again we're being impacted by two CCS projects, a potentially a third one based on how it's going under the ground and there. And then there's there's reports that there's potential overlap.

Of this, and we're concerned about the pressure.

And the impact on the aquifer and then a seismic activity.

Does the Railroad Commission have a framework with respect to geological storage?

And if if this if if this occurs.

SA

Sean Avitt 26:52

So I I'm not 100% certain what you're saying, but I I think I can interpret it and and and say that we review the permit application with respect to the rule and the amount of information that's required from the applicant in this case exon is subst. The geologic data that we get is.

You know, above and beyond pretty much any other process that we have here at the Commission.

The amount of information that is shared with with oil and gas companies is on par with the types of information that they put into their oil and gas projects.

And and we review that information, we make sure that.

The proposed fluids, the pressures that they're proposing.

Are going to contain the fluid and the pressures that if there's any well penetrations within.

The pressure area that those are identified and properly handled, some of those may need to be plugged. Potentially they propose a plan.

We review that plan and then of course, they're also required to provide information for long term management of the facility closure plan. You know any sort of emergency response that could potentially arise, all that has to come to us and and be reviewed.

SS

Sara Spikes 28:20

OK, I won't take up too.

I know you have a lot of other speakers here and I will not take up too much.

I just had two quick questions and then I'll just be off.

Is there a map of the AOR for sunflower?

That's that's not redacted.

SA Sean Avitt 28:35

Yes.

Yes, and so.

His the way that we've been doing this, you know, the is we typically include that information.

When?

The When the public comment period starts, when we when we put the information on the website.

We make the area of review available on the website and a map.

SS Sara Spikes 28:59

OK.

SA Sean Avitt 29:01

I think you are probably familiar with the.

The information that's available for Rose, which shows the AOR extent and so the the sunflower, will have the same type of material and and information on our website.

SS Sara Spikes 29:16

OK.

So that will come up on the the, the.

The 15th and then just the other quick question and this is regarding student safety because again the concern is having a situation like sitarsha and sulfur with the pipeline being .6 miles away from schools.

Are there any any other regulatory or additional regulatory requirements when you have pipelines and projects less than a mile from thousands of kids?

Or is it just the same standard requirement for all CCS projects?

SA Sean Avitt 30:02

So I'm not.

I'm not the person that reviews pipeline information or applications.

I'm the person that reviews the permit application with respect to the project. The

injection wells and all of that.
Stephanie, do you wanna? Yeah.

BD **Bryce Dubee** 30:20

And Sean, just to jump in, we've got.
We've got folks from pipeline safety on who are eager, I think.

SW **Stephanie Weidman** 30:22

Shut up on.
Yeah. Can you?
Can you all hear me?

BD **Bryce Dubee** 30:28

We we can hear.

SA **Sean Avitt** 30:28

Yep.

SS **Sara Spikes** 30:28

OK, I can get off.

SW **Stephanie Weidman** 30:29

I apologize.
I couldn't mute fast. Unf.
Apologize. So my name's Stephanie Weidman.
I'm a pipeline safety director.
And our pipeline safety regulations are do not include the jurisdiction for the layout
or the citing of the pipeline.
So our regular or where it's located. Essentially our regulations start once pipeline
construction commences.
So the railroad Commission as a whole does not have say on where pipelines are
located.
Taste are located and the regulations do not include.
Setbacks or anything in it because it's the regulations are specific. For once the
pipelines in operation.

SS Sara Spikes 31:13

OK.

Who has jurisdiction?

SW Stephanie Weidman 31:16

It is my understanding that there that those are agreements between the pipeline owner and the OR the pipeline operator and the general public.

No Commission has authority over those.

SS Sara Spikes 31:34

That's confusing.

So nobody had is taking ownership. Should something happen with that pipeline?

SW Stephanie Weidman 31:39

What once the pipeline is, the construction starts and it's in operation, it's under pipeline safety and we're the ones that are ensure that the regulations are followed. For, you know, incidents and accidents and just maintenance and operations on the pipeline.

SS Sara Spikes 31:55

OK. The pipeline is in the ground that I saw the pipeline going to the ground. So if something should go with that pipeline.

SW Stephanie Weidman 32:02

That's that.

That is pipeline safety.

It's just the location of it and where it was decided to be put is not does not have the Commission, does not have authority over that.

SS Sara Spikes 32:05

OK, that is.

OK.

SW **Stephanie Weidman** 32:12
I apologize.

SS **Sara Spikes** 32:12
OK. OK. No, thank you. Thank you. OK.

SW **Stephanie Weidman** 32:13
I misunderstood.

SS **Sara Spikes** 32:15
I won't take any more of your time.
Thank you so much.

SW **Stephanie Weidman** 32:18
I just will include just one more thing.

SS **Scott Sroufe** 32:19
Thank you, miss Sarah.

SW **Stephanie Weidman** 32:20
The CO2 pipelines are under our liquid rule. That part part 195 regulation.
And it's not.
It's not under the gas rule.
It can be a little bit confusing, but once you know once it's in service, we have
authority over that and ensuring that the operator follows the regulations.

SS **Sara Spikes** 32:37
So part 195 is the tax code or the which code is.

SW **Stephanie Weidman** 32:41
It's the, so it's the federal code, because the Commission is certified with the feds to
enforce the federal regulations in Texas.

SS **Sara Spikes** 32:51

OK.

Thank you. I appreciate it.

SW **Stephanie Weidman** 32:52

So it's perfect, perfect.

SS **Sara Spikes** 32:55

Thanks. OK.

Bye bye.

SS **Scott Sroufe** 32:56

Thank you for your comments, Ms. Spikes.

SS **Sara Spikes** 32:58

Thank you.

BD **Bryce Dubee** 32:59

Yes, thank you.

Do we have any other comments from anyone online?

Again, you can either raise your hand or type into the Q&A period or Q&A section if you have any questions or comments at this time.

So I know we've got a couple folks on. If you were just lifting in.

As always, we're thrilled to have you on here, but if you do have a comment or a question for our panel here or would like to provide some feedback, now would also be your opportunity.

And we can just get you unmuted.

And can.

Take your responses right now.

Not seen anyone yet.

I will give folks a little bit more time if you do have anything else you would like to ask or any feedback you'd like to provide, please let us know.

If not, I will hand things back over to Scott and we can close things out.

We'll just pause for a little bit here to see if anyone else has anything gain, the sense.

That's probably not the case.

So if that is the case, Scott back over to you.

SS **Scott Sroufe** 33:55

Great. Thank you again, Bryce.

Thank you for all of you who participated in today.

Again, I want to apologize for technical difficulties that were held.

Here we do want to invite you to join us again or invite someone else to come and join us again at our next listening session, which will be held on Tuesday, November 10th at 11:00 AM.

We will behold both virtually and in person. If you choose to come into Austin, we will be in the claywood all training room.

Which is on the 11th floor of the William B Travis Building, or you will see the link available later today or by as soon as tomorrow for the virtual meeting.

So thank you again for your participation.

We appreciate you very much.

We appreciate hearing from you and we would look forward to seeing you and hearing from you again.

Thank you very much.

● stopped transcription