May 21, 2010

Dear:

We would like to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Site ("Site") that is near your community and to request your assistance in helping spread public awareness about the advisories on eating contaminated fish and crab from the San Jacinto River ("River") that have been established by the Texas Department of State Health Services ("TDSHS").

This Site is located on the western bank of the San Jacinto River just north of I-10. It is partially submerged by the River. The Site was used during a portion of 1965 and 1966 for the disposal of wastes that contained a hazardous substance known as dioxin. (see attached map).

The Site has been designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a Superfund site and is being cleaned up under EPA's oversight. Two of the responsible companies under Superfund have fenced off the eastern and western bank of the San Jacinto River in the vicinity of the Site to prevent access to the Site and have posted signs cautioning the public about eating fish or crab caught in the vicinity of the Site. The companies have also agreed to begin a short-term remedy that will be designed to stop any on-going release of dioxin into the River and to investigate the Site further to determine a long-term remedy.

In conjunction with the Site remediation efforts, we are working with EPA and other stakeholders to build public awareness about the TDSHS fish advisories. Some samples collected from sediment, water, fish and crab tissues both upstream and downstream from the Site show elevated levels of dioxins above health-based benchmarks. Dioxins are found in the fatty tissues of fish and when consumed by humans, can have adverse health impacts. Very high exposures to dioxin cause skin conditions in people. In studies with laboratory animals, exposure to dioxins has been found to cause cancer, delay physical and neurological development, and have long-term effects on the immune and reproductive systems in the tested animals.

You can help in the following ways. Please identify what resources you may be able to offer (e.g. volunteers, programs within your organization that can be used to educate the public, organizing school contests, etc.). Please also provide us with a contact person within your organization and their phone number and email address.

We have partnered with Galveston Bay Foundation and you can contact them with the above-requested information by calling or emailing at:

[Insert information]

90025798

We look forward to collaborating with you on this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

_____	_____
Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia	Vince Ryan
Harris County Commissioner Precinct 2	Harris County Attorney