

Thank you, Dawn Buckingham, Texas Land Commissioner, for your opinion piece against the Climate Charter. I want to express my gratitude to the electric company and the oil and gas industry for how they contribute to my comfort every day, to the comfort of the citizens our city and to the livelihoods of its many employees.

I sympathize with your position against the Climate Charter. I, too, wish that climate chaos was not upon us and that there was no need to change. I wish that a warming atmosphere didn't result in 18 events nationwide that cost over a billion dollars each and 450 lives in 2022. I wish that increased temperatures weren't adding to the severity of storms (remember the 60 inches of rain in Houston's Hurricane Harvey that killed 100 people and caused \$125 billion worth of damage), that 14 tornadoes didn't hit northern Texas in December in one day, that the 2022 fire in our neighboring New Mexico didn't cost \$65 million and destroy 859,906 acres, and that "non-existent climate change" and human activity aren't causing a biodiversity apocalypse with 34% of plants and 40% of animals in danger of becoming extinct in the United States (United Serve). I wish that life on the planet doesn't need to have 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere for life to thrive and we are at 419 parts per million and going up. I wish that there weren't dead zones in the ocean. I wish we could just go on as business as usual and that oil and gas industry had no negative affects on health, the land, the water and the air. I wish that the cornerstone of our state's economy didn't make our fellow El Pasoans sick – those who live next to the refineries and power plants.

I wish the fossil fuel industry, which provide so many convenient and life giving services, wasn't exacting a terrible price in the lives of climate refugees, those who live on the border of the oceans and those who will live beyond you and me - our grandchildren. I wish there was a simple way forward and no complexity. But there isn't. That's why I support the Climate Charter with its three goals of reducing El Paso's contribution to climate change, investing in an environmentally sustainable future and advancing climate justice. The half of signatories who were under 35 to get this on the ballot have a keen grasp of the calamity of "business as usual." As a 73 year- old educator, I have deep respect for their efforts to work towards a cutting-edge, innovative and just Green Economy. With the Charter, we will be following in the footsteps of the flourishing cities of San

Antonio, Houston, Dallas and Austin. They all have a Climate Plan that brings green technology and jobs to their cities.

The Climate Charter is a beginning. It sets goals and values the democratic process. I am in favor of not using El Paso's precious city water for any additional fossil fuel activities outside of El Paso city limits than we already are. I am in favor of the city creating solar power jobs and having new and retrofitted buildings use rooftop solar whenever possible. After the initial investment is paid off in five years, the city will have access in perpetuity to clean energy. The \$11 million dollars paid to El Paso Electric in 2022 would be available for other purposes. This was not mentioned in the outside consultant's study.

The Charter is a call to study opportunities, to move in the direction of a non-fossil fuel-based economy. I understand this is very threatening to the fossil fuel industry which knew in 1977 from Exxon's study that CO2 emissions could elevate the temperature 2-3 degrees and threaten life on the planet. The El Paso Chamber's study doesn't acknowledge the 170,000 jobs that will be created using the innovation of the Green Economy and help stop El Paso's brain drain. Their study portrays a call to examine the benefits of the city using solar and retrofitting buildings as mandate. There will be no requirements for individuals or small businesses to use solar.

Yes, Ms. Buckingham, fossil fuel is tried and true, and dirty and lethal. I wish it wasn't so. It is a daunting task to support Texas, our veterans and our children without destroying the earth, air and water in the process. The Climate Charter is a beginning for El Paso to have a place to address the reality that the warmer planet is making bigger storms, higher seawater, more droughts, more wind, more migration, more fires, more floods. This is such a heavy lift that we need every sector to think outside the box and work together. That's the invitation of the Climate Charter.

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