



By Robert Osborne

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On August 22, the Sunset Advisory Commission will meet in Austin regarding the future of the Texas Railroad Commission (RRC). Sunset works by setting a date on which an agency is abolished unless the Legislature passes a bill to continue it. Sunset staff has evaluated the Commission, and has issued its recommendations. The Sunset Advisory Commission will review these recommendations, and will conduct several public hearings. They will then decide on a package of changes to bring to the full Legislature in 2017.

The Alliance will take an active part in the Sunset process. At the August 22 hearing, Alliance members will be participating by bringing a positive “face” of the Texas oil and gas industry. The Alliance will introduce its campaign “I Am Texas Oil,” which will show a unique perspective of the people working in the Texas oil and gas industry. All levels of membership will attend the hearing – from oil company CEO’s, to service supply workers, to college students.

The Sunset Advisory Commission has determined that the functions of the RRC continue to be needed, and that a standalone agency is warranted to carry out these functions. The Commission’s Executive Summary reported that the agency’s outdated name misleads the public and continues to impede the agency’s efforts to be more transparent. Changing the commission’s name to the Texas Energy Resources Commission would help resolve these issues, the report stated.

However, Sunset recommendations also included increasing bonding requirements for small producers, moving contested case hearing to another agency, and possibly increasing enforcement. The Alliance will be challenging these and other Sunset recommendation that would increase the cost of doing business for independents.

The Alliance’s government relations team is led by Executive Vice President John Tintera. He is the former executive director of the RRC, and has a unique perspective of the workings of the agency. The other members of the government relations team are Chief Lobbyist Bill Stevens and General Counsel Gloria Leal. The Alliance’s government relations team will continue to follow the Sunset process and will other issues vital to the oil and gas industry.