



Texas Radiation Advisory Board

Michael Ford, C.H.P.
Chair

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June 25, 2004

Mr. Albert Hawkins
Executive Commissioner
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
P.O. Box 13247
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Commissioner Hawkins:

I was hoping to speak with you personally on this matter; however, I understand the hectic nature of your schedule and a letter will have to suffice in this instance.

I want to express my sincere thanks to you for meeting with Representative Chisum and me to discuss the HHSC reorganization, specifically as it affects the Bureau of Radiation Control (BRC). Thank you very much for sharing your perspectives. I want to assure you that I am in *strong* agreement with you on the need for improved efficiencies in state agencies and for reducing redundant functions in order to maximize the use and benefit of state monies.

I appreciate your willingness to consider the issues the Texas Radiation Advisory Board has raised to date. To be concise, this matter was discussed at length during the 5 June 2004 meeting of the Board. We are still very concerned with the current pace and direction of the reorganization of the radiation control program and the proposed structure in particular.

You specifically questioned me on my concerns regarding the proposed organizational structure. I know of specific examples (Kentucky, Nebraska, and Louisiana) where similar or identical reorganizations had not worked or were not working with respect to the radiation control programs in those states. I would be more than happy to provide you with the specifics, if you would desire. Further, I did not get the sense that the Commission has any *validated* bench mark to which it was targeting the reorganization effort (i.e., modeling after an existing, viable organization executing analogous functions).

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You have an enormous task before you, and to your credit, it appears that many of the items required by HB 2292 will be accomplished by 1 September 2004. However, the “functional realignment” does not appear to be one of the HB 2292-mandated activities and should proceed at a much more deliberative pace — especially given the absence of a proven benchmark.

As you would expect, the impending specter of a reduction-in-force has already created a difficult work environment that is affecting the work at hand. This is further compounded by the feeling that a functioning agency(s) is being dismantled and formed into an organization that is *known not to work* in other states. I know that this situation is neither your vision nor intention. However, your employees are baffled and alarmed with the speed and haste of this reorganization, fundamentally large portions of which are not required by HB 2292.

I cannot over-emphasize the serious nature of the Bureau of Radiation Control’s duties, especially in regard to mitigating terrorist threats and emergency response capabilities. Until demonstrated otherwise, the TRAB believes that it is in the best interest of the state that the radiation control functions remain in a unified program, under expert leadership.

Please contact me if you have concerns or would like to discuss any considerations regarding radiation control. The TRAB very much desires to be an asset to you during this reorganization.

Very truly yours,
Original signed by

Michael S. Ford, C.H.P.
Chair

cc: Governor Rick Perry
Representative Arlene Wohlgemuth
Senator Jane Nelson
Representative Warren Chisum
Senate Health & Human Services Committee
House Human Services Committee