
From: Andrew Dobbs <dobbs@texasenvironment.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 16, 2014 12:52 PM
To: Andrew Dobbs
Subject: Victory: Vindication for Daniela!

Hello Zero Wasters!

Earlier this year AZWA member and Zero Waste expert Daniela Ochoa Gonzalez was forced to resign from the city's Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) when the City Auditor accused her of a conflict of interest. With no real chance for due process the Auditor issued a report filled with unsubstantiated allegations and mistakes of law, and the Statesman reported these allegations as facts. As a result, Daniela was not only compelled to resign from ZWAC, she lost her job.

This is not where the story ends, however. Almost immediately AZWA swung into action along with our allies at Texas Campaign for the Environment, the leadership of Texas Disposal Systems (who were also implicated in the report—Daniela was alleged to be serving their interests, though the Auditor never exactly showed how) and dozens of Daniela's friends and colleagues from across the community. We all came out to ZWAC, to the Ethics Review Commission and contacted City Council to demand that Daniela's name be cleared.

Today, Council did just that. Daniela has finally been vindicated.

City Council passed a stinging rebuke of the City Auditor, rejecting the report outright, apologizing to Daniela, thanking her for her service on ZWAC and requiring that all future copies of the Auditor's report—both online and in print—feature a conspicuous note that says that Council rejects its findings. City Hall insiders told us that they'd never seen a statement so strong against a city report. The resolution was so deeply supported that when it was passed unanimously 6-0 with one member away from the proceedings—Kathie Tovo—she came back and asked that they bring the item up again so that she could vote for it, making it a 7-0 resolution. Someone noted that we scored a touchdown and even got the extra point!

This is the work that AZWA does—winning. Whether it's getting food truck recycling legalized or protecting the interests of our Zero Waste public servants, demanding stronger standards in our Zero Waste programs and policies or watchdogging local facilities, we are leading the way for a city where waste is a way of the past. As we like to say, we'll stop at nothing.

I hope you'll join us for our next meeting, October 29, at the Terrazas Branch of the Austin Public Library (1105 E. Cesar Chavez), 7 PM. Come join us and see how you can be a part of our next victory.

Thanks, and we'll see you then!

Yours,

Andrew Dobbs
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