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DISTRICT 25

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For Immediate Release:  
Sunday, May 19, 2019

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## **Senator Campbell Adds Critical Amendment to SB 2726 to Protect Residents Near Quarries**

AUSTIN- Sunday evening Senator Campbell added a critical floor amendment to SB 2726, a bill which allows facilities seeking amended permits under the Texas Clean Air Act to begin construction before their permit is approved by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Senator Campbell's amendment prevents the bill's provisions from applying to an aggregate production operation such as a quarry or a concrete batch plant if it's located within 880 yards of a residence, school, or hospital.

"Living next to quarry blasts, rock crushers, and concrete plants has unfortunately become part of the daily routine for too many residents in Central Texas. When these facilities seek to expand close to residences, schools, and hospitals, it's only appropriate that we ask them to wait for their permit to be approved before they can begin construction."

Senator Campbell started the session by filing Senate Bill 208, a stronger version of this amendment which unfortunately never received a committee hearing. However, she was pleased to gain a small victory for Texas residents. She said she will refile SB 208 next session and expects to build off the new 880 yard setbacks that will now be in state statute. She said also that despite the uphill battle, she's encouraged at the attention that Texas residents have brought to the aggregate industry and the health and safety standards around them.

Senator Campbell's other quarry monitoring bill, Senate Bill 694, appears dead in the House after passing the Senate earlier this month. With less than a week to go, it too, can hopefully be revived as an amendment to another bill.

The full text of Senator Campbell's amendment to SB 2726 is included below:

*A person may not begin construction under this section if the facility that is the subject of the permit amendment is an aggregate production operation or a concrete batch plant located within 880 yards of a building that is used a single or multifamily residence, school, or hospital.*

The House author of the bill will now have the opportunity to concur with Senator Campbell's amendment or go to a conference committee.

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*State Senator Donna Campbell is an emergency room physician from New Braunfels who chairs the Veteran Affairs and Border Security Committee.*