



**State Senator
Kirk Watson
District 14**

Friday, November 16, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kate Alexander, Office of Senator Kirk Watson: (512) 463-0114

Austin added to VW emissions settlement

Austin and its neighboring communities will now receive \$16.3 million from the Volkswagen settlement fund under a revised allocation released on Friday by the Texas Commission on Environment Quality.

"The inclusion of Austin in the Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Fund better reflects the fundamental purpose of the fund: cleaning up the damage wrought by VW's emissions fraud," said Sen. Kirk Watson. "I appreciate that TCEQ and the Governor's Office were willing to reconsider the initial plan. They recognized that our region was greatly affected by the company's fraud and our air quality would benefit from these funds."

The \$3 billion VW settlement was apportioned to states based upon the number of affected vehicles registered within the state. The Austin-Round Rock metro area had more violating vehicles per capita than all other regions in the state but was excluded under the state's draft plan for the \$170 million fund because the region was within 2015 federal clean air standards.

Since the release of the draft plan in August, Sen. Watson has been working with the Office of Gov. Greg Abbott and TCEQ Chairman Jon Niermann to rectify the situation.

"This approach is much more fair and will help our region stay within federal air quality standards," Sen. Watson said.

#####