

POST

TCEQ Out of Touch with Simplicity

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TCEQ believes their rules are written with the goal of simplicity in mind.

“[The] executive director believes TCEQ rules are written with this goal [of simplicity] in mind.”—TCEQ Staff (see [link \(https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/legal/rules/rule_lib/petitions/17023PET_petition.pdf\)](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/legal/rules/rule_lib/petitions/17023PET_petition.pdf))”



“Simple” is probably the last word I think anyone in the business community, or the environmental community for that matter, would use to describe how TCEQ rules are written.

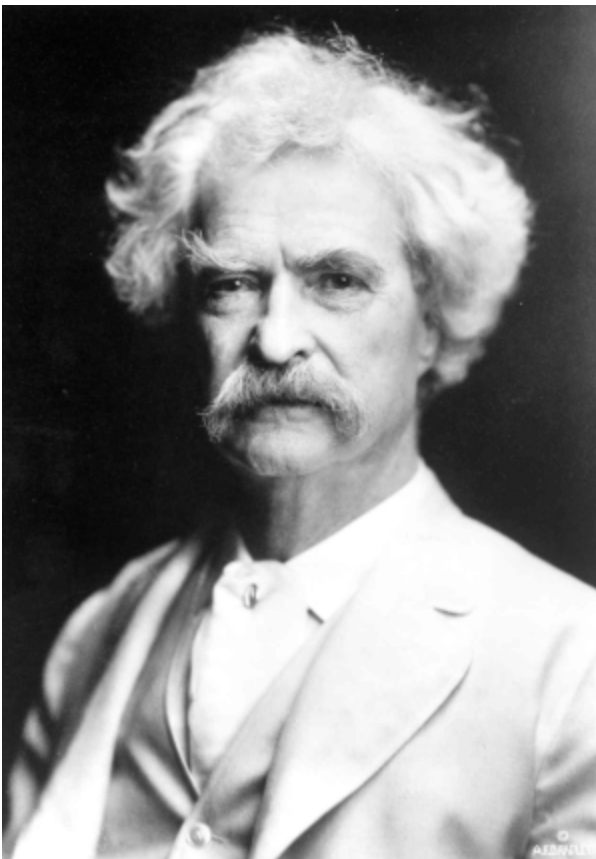
TCEQ’s belief that their rules are written with the goal of simplicity in mind is either baseless—or they are failing miserably at their goal. Either way, their eyes must be opened. This approach cannot continue. The days of piling more and more complicated rules on top of more and more complicated rules are over. Complexity can no longer be ignored.

“Fools ignore complexity; pragmatists suffer it; experts avoid it; geniuses remove it.”- Alan Perlis



Time for genius. Plenty of geniuses are out there—including staff at TCEQ.

“Thousands of geniuses live and die undiscovered – either by themselves or by others.” – Mark Twain



What's fascinating is that this move toward simplicity will happen. It's just how everything in the universe works—including air quality management:

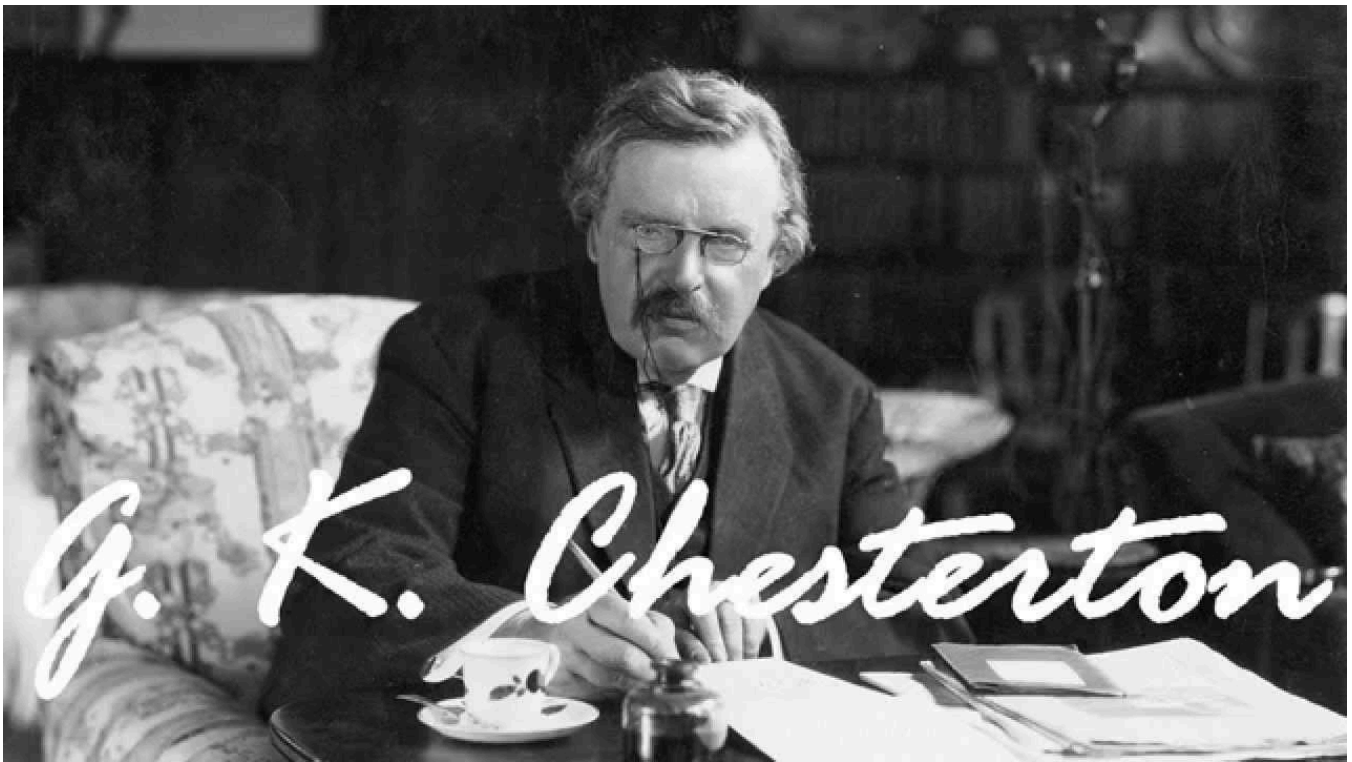
“—”“The whole world is certainly heading for a great simplicity, not deliberately, but rather inevitably.

The simplicity towards which the world is driving is the necessary outcome of all our systems and speculations and of our deep and continuous contemplation of things. For the universe is like everything in it; we have to look at it repeatedly and habitually before we see it. It is only when we have seen it for the hundredth time that we see it for the first time. The more consistently things are contemplated, the more they tend to unify themselves and therefore to simplify themselves. The simplification of anything is always sensational. [...]

Few people will dispute that all the typical movements of our time are upon this road towards simplification. Each system seeks to be more fundamental than the other; each seeks, in the literal sense, to undermine the other. In art, for example, the old conception of man, classic as the Apollo Belvedere, has first been attacked by the realist, who asserts that man, as a fact of natural history, is a creature with colourless hair and a freckled face. Then comes the Impressionist, going yet deeper, who asserts that to his physical eye, which alone is certain, man is a creature with purple hair and a grey face. Then comes the Symbolist, and says that to his soul, which alone is certain, man is a creature with green hair and a blue face. And all the great writers of our time represent in one form or another this attempt to reestablish communication with the elemental, or, as it is sometimes more roughly and fallaciously expressed, to return to nature. [...]

But the giants of our time are undoubtedly alike in that they approach by very different roads this conception of the return to simplicity. Ibsen returns to nature by the angular exterior of fact, Maeterlinck by the eternal tendencies of

fable. Whitman returns to nature by seeing how much he can accept, Tolstoy by seeing how much he can reject.” – G.K. Chesterton

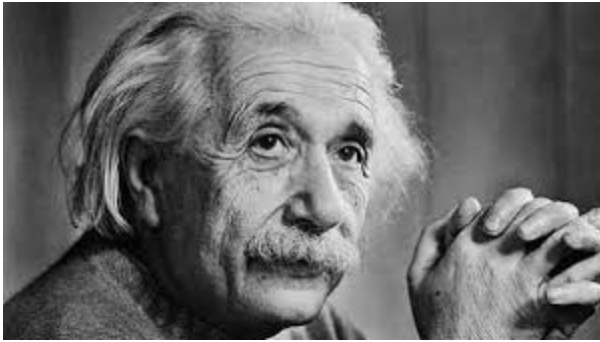


“The main purpose of science is simplicity and as we understand more things, everything is becoming simpler.” – Edward Teller

“I’ll tell you what you need to be a great scientist. You don’t have to be able to understand very complicated things. It’s just the opposite. You have to be able to see what looks like the most complicated thing in the world and, in a flash, find the underlying simplicity. That’s what you need: a talent for simplicity.” – Mitchell Wilson

“Science may be described as the art of systematic over-simplification.” – Karl Popper

“[T]he grand aim of all science...is to cover the greatest possible number of empirical facts by logical deductions from the smallest possible number of hypotheses or axioms.”—Albert Einstein”



“Simplicity does not precede complexity, but follows it.”- Alan J. Perlis”

I cannot tell you what the result will be on June 7th when the TCEQ Commissioners consider my [petition](http://——“The whole world is certainly heading for a great simplicity, not deliberately, but rather inevitably. The simplicity towards which the world is driving is the necessary outcome of all our systems and speculations and of our deep and continuous contemplation of things. For the universe is like everything in it; we have to look at it repeatedly and habitually before we see it. It is only when we have seen it for the hundredth time that we see it for the first time. The more consistently things are contemplated, the more they tend to unify themselves and therefore to simplify themselves. The simplification of anything is always sensational. [...] Few people will dispute that all the typical movements of our time are upon this road towards simplification. Each system seeks to be more fundamental than the other; each seeks, in the literal sense, to undermine the other. In art, for example, the old conception of man, classic as the Apollo Belvedere, has first been attacked by the realist, who asserts that man, as a fact of natural history, is a creature with colourless hair and a freckled face. Then comes the Impressionist, going yet deeper, who asserts that to his physical eye, which alone is certain, man is

a creature with purple hair and a grey face. Then comes the Symbolist, and says that to his soul, which alone is certain, man is a creature with green hair and a blue face. And all the great writers of our time represent in one form or another this attempt to reestablish communication with the elemental, or, as it is sometimes more roughly and fallaciously expressed, to return to nature. [...] But the giants of our time are undoubtedly alike in that they approach by very different roads this conception of the return to simplicity. Ibsen returns to nature by the angular exterior of fact, Maeterlinck by the eternal tendencies of fable. Whitman returns to nature by seeing how much he can accept, Tolstoy by seeing how much he can reject.” – G.K.

Chesterton “The main purpose of science is simplicity and as we understand more things, everything is becoming simpler.” – Edward Teller “I’ll tell you what you need to be a great scientist. You don’t have to be able to understand very complicated things. It’s just the opposite. You have to be able to see what looks like the most complicated thing in the world and, in a flash, find the underlying simplicity. That’s what you need: a talent for simplicity.” – Mitchell Wilson “Science may be described as the art of systematic over-simplification.” – Karl Popper “[T]he grand aim of all science... is to cover the greatest possible number of empirical facts by logical deductions from the smallest possible number of hypotheses or axioms.” – Albert Einstein “Simplicity does not precede complexity, but follows it.” – Alan J. Perlis) to begin a concerted effort toward regulatory simplicity. But I can tell you that eventually it will succeed. Simplicity always does.

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