Date:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| County:       | ROW CSJ:        |
| Federal Project No.:       | Parcel:        |
| Highway:       | From:       |
|  | To:       |

BY CERTIFIED MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED NO.

Dear      ,

In acquiring property for the highway systems of Texas, the Texas Department of Transportation follows a definite procedure for appraising the land needed and for handling personal negotiations with each owner. As has been or will be explained by the State’s negotiator,      , your property located     , as described in the enclosed property description, is to be acquired for the construction or improvement of the above-referenced highway project.

We believe at this stage of the purchase process it is mutually beneficial to confirm that based on an appraisal, the State is authorized to offer you $      for your property. This amount is the total amount, of just compensation for your property, as determined in accordance with State law, less oil, gas and sulfur, subject to clear title being conveyed to the State. In accordance with State law, it is the policy of the Department to negotiate with the fee owner(s) of the real property with the understanding that you will, in turn, negotiate with any lessee or other party who may own any interest in the land or improvements, with the exception of public utility easements, which will be handled separately by the Department.

This offer is contingent upon your execution of an agreement titled *“Petroleum Storage Tank Removal Agreement”*, a copy of which is attached to this letter. As you know, the presence of one or more underground petroleum storage tanks and/or the related flow lines and facilities upon your property, creates the possibility of contamination due to past or present leaks and/or spills. Because it is impossible to determine the extent of possible contamination, if any, until such facilities as may be within the property being acquired are removed, and/or due to construction work various layers of the soil are removed, the total amount being offered for your property is based upon a “clean” appraisal. This means the values stated are assuming there is absolutely no contamination. In order for the State to pay you this full amount, should you accept this offer, the State requires that you execute the attached *Petroleum Storage Tank Removal Agreement*, as both State and Federal laws and regulations require that any contamination actually found to exist must be taken care of by the property owner and operator, in accordance with such laws and regulations. If you desire to accept the dollar amount of this offer, but are not willing to execute the tank removal agreement, the State must consider the offer rejected.

This offer to purchase includes the contributory values of the improvement(s) listed below, which are considered to be part of the real property. Since the improvement(s) must be removed, it is the policy of the Department to permit owners who convey voluntarily to the Department to thereafter retain the improvement(s), if they wish to do so. The retention values shown below are the estimated amounts the improvement(s) would bring if sold on public bids. If you wish to retain title to any of the following improvement(s) and remove it (them) from the right of way, the amount of the above offer must be reduced by the appropriate retention amount(s). This option to retain the improvement(s) does NOT apply should it become necessary for the Department to acquire the real property by eminent domain.

| Improvement | Amount to be Subtracted if Retained |
| --- | --- |
|       | $      |
|       | $      |
|       | $      |
|       | $      |
|       | $      |
|       | $      |

If you wish to accept the offer based upon this appraisal, please contact       at (   )    -      as soon as possible so the payment procedure to obtain your payment may be started. If you are not willing to accept this offer, you may submit a written request for administrative settlement/counteroffer, setting forth a counteroffer amount and the basis for such amount, provided such settlement request is received in writing within 30 days from the date of this letter.

Please note that your right to submit an administrative settlement shall be forfeited if such a settlement request is not received within the 30 day time deadline.

In the event the condition of the property changes for any reason, the State shall have the right to withdraw this offer.

After the date of payment of the purchase price, or the date of deposit in court of funds to satisfy the award of compensation as determined through eminent domain proceedings to acquire real property, you will be reimbursed for any fair and reasonable incidental expenses necessarily incurred in transferring title to the property for use by the Texas Department of Transportation. Expenses eligible for reimbursement may include (1) recording fees, transfer taxes and similar expenses incidental to conveying the real property to the Department and (2) penalty costs for prepayment of any preexisting recorded mortgage entered into in good faith encumbering the real property. Voluntary unnecessary expenses or expenses incurred in clearing questionable title will not be eligible for reimbursement. Eligible incidental expenses will be reimbursed upon submission of a claim supported by receipted bills or other evidence of actual expenses incurred. You may file a written request for review if you believe that the Department failed to properly determine the eligibility for, or the amount of, incidental expenses to be reimbursed. There is no standard form on which to request a review of a claim; however, the claim must be filed with this office within six months after you are notified of the Department’s determination on any claim for reimbursement.

You may be entitled to additional payments and services under the State’s Relocation Assistance Program. It is emphasized, however, that any benefits to which you may be entitled under this program will be handled entirely separate from and in addition to this transaction. You will receive a brochure entitled *“Relocation Assistance”* which will inform you of eligibility requirements, payments and services which are available.

You have the right to discuss with others any offer or agreement regarding the Department’s acquisition of the subject property, or you may (but are not required to) keep the offer or agreement confidential from others, subject to the provisions of Chapter 552, Government Code (the Public Records Act) as it may apply to the Department.

Attached is a copy of the Texas Department of Transportation brochure entitled *“Right of Way Purchase”* which we trust will give you a better understanding of the procedures followed by the Department in purchasing property. If you have any questions regarding the details as to the type of facility to be built or concerning the purchase transaction, please do not hesitate to ask       to answer them.

Please see the enclosed copy of the Texas Landowner Bill of Rights.

Finally, we enclose copies of all appraisal reports relating to your property being acquired which were prepared in the ten (10) years preceding the date of this offer and produced or acquired by the Department, including the appraisal on which this offer is based.

Sincerely,

Right of Way Manager or other signatory

ENCLOSURES:

Appraisal Report(s)

Landowner Bill of Rights

Brochure (“Right of Way Purchase”)

Petroleum Storage Tank Removal Agreement