

# **REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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## **MEETING SUMMARY**

Thursday, July 29, 2021 – 10:00 A. M.  
Houston-Galveston Area Council  
Virtual Teams Meeting

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### **MEMBER PRESENT**

City of Houston – Win Colbert  
City of LaPorte – Kristin Gauthier  
Waller County – Siddharth Rajmohan  
Fort Bend County – Joel Patterson  
Harris County, Precinct 2 – Kristen Lee  
METRO – Edmund Petry  
Charlie Gagen – American Lung Association

### **ALTERNATE PRESENT**

Air Alliance Houston– Harrison Humphreys  
Houston Advanced Research Center – Ebrahim Eslami  
EHCA – Anne Dieringer  
METRO – Vincent Sanders  
TXDOT – Charles Airiohuodion  
Williams Brothers Construction – Marc Anderson  
Greater Houston Partnership – Steven Will  
Port Houston – Kenneth Gathright  
City of Houston – Darryl Tate  
Waller County – Siddharth Rajmohan

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Nicole Rajtak

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Houston-Galveston Area Council – Andrew DeCandis  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Mike Burns  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Graciela Lubertino  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlene Mullins  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cassandra Marshall  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Susan Jaworski  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Frank Pagliei  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Deborah Mayfield  
Environmental Protection Agency – Carl Young  
Environmental Protection Agency – Melanie Magee  
TCEQ – Graham Bates  
TCEQ – Jamie Zech  
TCEQ – Alison Stokes

### **BRIEFING**

#### **Overview**

- a. RAQPAC Members and Alternates were presented with agency reports (EPA update, TCEQ update, TERP update and Regional Air Quality Monitoring update); and the meeting concluded with announcements.
- b. Go to <http://www.h-gac.com/board-of-directors/advisory-committees/regional-air-quality-planning-advisory-committee/meeting-material.aspx> to view the meeting materials for this meeting.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

### **ITEM 1A. Introductions**

Win Colbert called the meeting to order and members were introduced.

### **ITEM 1B. Approval of Meeting Summary ( 6-24-21)**

Meeting summary approved.

## **AGENCY REPORTS**

### **ITEM 2A. EPA Update (Carl Young)**

**A representative from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) briefed the committee:**

#### **Update on Serious Area Attainment Deadlines for the 2008 Ozone Air Quality Standard**

Last month EPA reported that we have received a request to grant the Houston area a 1-year extension of the attainment date for the 2008 ozone standard as the area's 4<sup>th</sup> highest daily maximum 8-hour average in the 2020 attainment year is 75 parts per billion.

It is expected that EPA will publish a national proposal for the Serious ozone nonattainment areas that will cover:

- Determinations of Attainment by the Attainment Date
- Extensions of the Attainment Date
- Reclassification of Areas to Severe

The national proposal is now expected to be published this fall (previously it was expected to be published this summer). It is also expected that the proposal will address the request for a 1-year extension of the Houston attainment date. Publication of the proposal in the Federal Register will start a 30-day comment period.

#### **Upcoming EPA Virtual Workshop on Methane Detection Technology**

EPA will hold a virtual public workshop August 23 and 24, 2021, to hear perspectives on innovative technologies that could be used to detect methane emissions from the oil and natural gas industry. The workshop will focus on methane-sensing technologies that are not currently approved for use in EPA's New Source Performance Standards for the oil and natural gas industry and how those technologies could be applied in the oil and natural gas sector. EPA's state, local, and tribal regulatory partners, along with members of the public, are encouraged to attend the workshop. Attendees will have an opportunity to submit questions for the panelists.

EPA encourages anyone who is interested in developments in methane detection technology to attend the workshop. The deadline to register is August 18, 2021. Information on the workshop, including information on registration and a live stream of the event is available at <https://www.epa.gov/controlling-air-pollution-oil-and-natural-gas-industry/epa-methane-detection-technology-workshop>.

#### **Oil and Natural Gas Sector Regulations**

The Congressional Review Act (CRA) provides a process by which Congress can rescind a regulation that is promulgated by a Federal agency. On June 30, 2021, President Biden, signed into law a joint resolution of Congress, adopted under CRA, disapproving the EPA 2020 "Policy Rule" regulation which amended the Oil and Natural Gas Sector New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources.

In a separate final rule promulgated shortly after the 2020 Policy Rule, EPA promulgated several technical amendments to the amended 2016 Oil and Natural Gas Sector NSPS. This Technical Rule included amendments to

address a range of technical and implementation issues in response to administrative petitions for reconsideration and other issues brought to EPA's attention since the 2016 NSPS. The CRA resolution that disapproved the 2020 Policy Rule did not address the 2020 Technical Rule; therefore, those amendments remain in effect.

Since the 2020 Policy Rule was rescinded, the EPA has received questions about the Oil and Natural Gas Sector NSPS. In response EPA has developed a Question-and-Answer document. It's available at:  
[https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-07/qa\\_cra\\_for\\_2020\\_oil\\_and\\_gas\\_policy\\_rule.6.30.2021.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-07/qa_cra_for_2020_oil_and_gas_policy_rule.6.30.2021.pdf).

Additionally, Executive Order (E.O.) 13990, (Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis) was issued January 20, 2021. The E.O. instructs EPA to consider taking steps by September 2021 to:

- Propose a rule to reduce methane emissions from the oil and natural gas sector by suspending, revising, or rescinding the NSPS modifications finalized in 2020.
- Propose new regulations to establish comprehensive standards of performance and emission guidelines for methane and VOC emissions from existing operations in the oil and natural gas sector.

As a result of the E.O., EPA intends to propose a rule for public comment in September 2021. As part of this rulemaking, EPA anticipates further explaining the impact of the CRA disapproval of the 2020 Policy Rule, as well as identifying and proposing appropriate changes to resolve any discrepancies in the regulatory text between the 2016 NSPS and 2020 Technical Rule. These proposed changes, along with the proposal to respond to E.O. 13990, will be made available for public comment.

## **ITEM 2B. TCEQ Update (Graham Bates)**

**TCEQ staff gave an update to the members regarding the latest information:**

### **. Rules for United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Oil and Natural Gas Control Techniques Guidelines (CTG)**

- On June 30, 2021, the commission adopted the Chapter 115 volatile organic compounds (VOC) reasonably available control technology (RACT) Rules for EPA's Oil and Natural Gas CTG (Rule Project No. 2020-038-115-AI). The rulemaking incorporates rules to address the emissions sources in the EPA's CTG and ensures RACT is implemented for each of these emission sources as required under the Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA).
- The public hearing was held on February 23, 2021 at 10 a.m. CST. Because of Winter Storm Uri, the public comment period was extended from March 2, 2021 to March 16, 2021.
- For additional questions or information about the rulemaking, please contact Lindley Anderson of the Stationary Source Programs Team at [lindley.anderson@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:lindley.anderson@tceq.texas.gov).

### **Request for Reasonably Available Control Measures Ideas**

- The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is requesting ideas for potential reasonably available control measures (RACM) that could be implemented in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (HGB), and San Antonio nonattainment areas. RACM is a requirement under the Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA), §172(c)(1) and is required for nonattainment areas with an ozone classification of moderate nonattainment and above. Potential RACM measures submitted to the TCEQ will be used to assist in nonattainment area planning for the 2008 and 2015 eight-hour ozone national ambient air quality standards. The deadline to submit RACM ideas is August 6, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.
- Information about this request and RACM idea submissions should be directed to Joseph Thomas at [Joseph.Thomas@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:Joseph.Thomas@tceq.texas.gov) and Anthony DeJesus at [Anthony.Dejesus@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:Anthony.Dejesus@tceq.texas.gov).

## 2021 Regional Haze SIP Revision

- On June 30, 2021, the commission adopted the 2021 Regional Haze SIP Revision (Project No. 2019-112-SIP-NR). The SIP revision demonstrates compliance with the regional haze requirements of FCAA, §169A and the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Regional Haze Rule for the second planning period. The SIP revision addresses regional haze in Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks in Texas and Class I areas located outside Texas that may be affected by emissions from within the state.
- For additional questions or information about the rulemaking, please contact Margaret Earnest at [Margaret.earnest@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:Margaret.earnest@tceq.texas.gov).
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## ITEM 2C. TERP Update (Nate Hickman)

### TERP Staff gave an update to the members on the following information:

Air Grants is closing out the fiscal biennium and planning the programs and timelines for the coming biennium. We will have new updates on program openings and webinars in the coming month.

### Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP)

- Currently no grant programs are accepting applications.
- Keep updated on all programs by visiting the TERP website at [www.terpgrants.org](http://www.terpgrants.org). Questions about any of the TERP programs can be e-mailed to [terp@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:terp@tceq.texas.gov).

### Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Plan (TxVEMP) Program

The TxVEMP program for the purchase of Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Level 2 charging stations remains open until September 9, 2021. Eligible projects must provide charging services to public places, workplaces, or multi-unit dwellings. This grant round will provide up to \$2,500 per ZEV level 2 dual pedestal charging station.

- This is a statewide program with approximately \$8.3 million in available funding remaining.
- Eligible projects will be processed for approval on a first-come, first served basis.

Visit [www.txvwfund.org](http://www.txvwfund.org) to stay updated on future grant rounds and to find eligibility requirements, grant materials, and project summary reports.

Contact TxVEMP staff by phone at (833) 215-TXVW (8989) or by email at [VWsettle@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:VWsettle@tceq.texas.gov).

## ITEM 2D. Regional Air Quality Monitoring Update (Andrew DeCandis)

Since our last meeting in June, there has been one exceedance of the 2008 75 ppb ground level ozone standard and the 2015 70ppb standard. So far, the regions fourth highest value for 2021 is 78 ppb which is no change from last month. The design value for 2019-2021 period is 75 ppb as measured at the Bayland Park Monitoring Station.

Moving on the final PM 2.5 average at the Clinton Road monitor in June was 10.01 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and so far in April, we have seen an average of 11.79.

## ACTION ITEMS

### ITEM 3A. (Andrew DeCandis)

**The Subcommittee members unanimously approved the following position:**

Chair-Win Colbert

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### ITEM 4A. Program Update-Commute Solutions (Deborah Mayfield)

Deborah gave an update on how Commute Solutions help to improve air quality. In order to achieve these goals, they promote shared and active transportation which includes car sharing, biking, walking and etc. Discussion continued that Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee

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this is done to reduce peak period traffic congestion and to reduce vehicle miles traveled and the main goal is to reduce air quality in our region. In further discussion the regional employer survey that was done December 7 through January 6, 2021 was completed to focus on the impact that COVID-19 had on our work sites within our region. Our H-GAC partners distributed this survey, and this gave us 237 work sites participants. Staff solicited for any suggestions on the upcoming survey which will take place again in December.

A few events that were mentioned, Gulf Coast Regional bike month celebration. They were able to work with nine of our transportation agencies and were able to participate in several activities that took place throughout the region. It was for 2022. Also, in June they held a telework week which ran through June 21-June 25. Employer's were given suggestion for new resources from the commute solutions website. It contained information for employers to build or improve their current telework program. They have developed a three series webinar; one took place on June 24 and it focused on leveraging telework during the return to the office. As well as cloud security virtual office presentation which was conducted by our H-GAC ITT department. In the future, upcoming webinar on August 12, 2021 will be focusing on managing the hybrid environment. This will be geared toward managers and employees. Everyone is invited to attend.

#### **ITEM 4B. Regional Transportation Plan Guidance Considerations (Mike Burns and Graciela Lubertino)**

Staff gave an overview of the regional transportation plan for our region that is updated every four years. In further discussion described a physically constraint program for the next twenty years. Discussion continued with TXDOT graphic showing the relationship with not only statewide plans, but the regional plans long term and short-term program document. It was pointed out that this can also be referred to as the long-range transportation plan. It was made known that most are familiar with the state ten-year unified transportation plan. Also, might be familiar with the four-year TIP plan and statewide SIP transportation plan. These are intended to describe the project pipeline.

As discussion continued the graphic is intended to show the interrelationship of our regional programming documents that describe for the public transportation task that are undertaken for the region. The regions investment that are included in the transportation improvement program are: evaluation of the transportation system or project measures and the visioning component. It was pointed out that a prerequisite for inclusion for a project in the TIP is the initial inclusion in the RTP. As well as many of the smaller studies evaluation and outreach are programmed in the UPWP and most of the need identified is carried out through the performance monitoring. Finally, the discussion of the next step would be a needs assessment phase followed by a scenario phase before finalizing the plans content and recommendation for approval and the conformity determination.

Graciela Lubertino gave an overview to the committee how conformity is a link between air quality and transportation plan because our region is in nonattainment of the ozone standard. Actually, two ozone standards for the 2008 eight-hour 75ppb, and 2015 eight-hour 70ppb. It was further discussed that non-attainment for these standards, we need to show that the emissions coming from the transportation plan are not higher than the budget established in the air quality plan to obtain the standard. The committee was informed, it is ensured that the transportation plan do not delay the attainment of the national ambient of the air quality standard. Discussion continued that U.S. is the second admitter for greenhouse gas, Texas is the first admitter for green house gases. Staff pointed out the idea to start doing green house gas inventory for our region. We need to be calculated for the transportation sector. In 2018, the United Nation intergovernmental panel climate change came out with a report. This report is to try to fight against climate change, support sustainable development and support efforts to eradicate poverty.

#### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

##### **ITEM 5A. H-GAC Update (Andrew DeCandis)**

The committee was updated that the work on the PM 2.5 Path Forward for 2021 is continuing. Staff mentioned most of the material received has been compiled to put all the information into a draft report. A draft copy will be sent to the PM 2.5 subcommittee members within the next week. Discussion continued that an agenda will be ready at our next RAQPAC meeting, which will detail what is new, and what has changed over previous years. At that time, staff will request for committee approval at our September meeting.

Staff updated the committee on upcoming air quality meetings:

- Transportation Air Quality (TAQ)-August 4, 2021 @ 10:00AM
- Houston-Galveston Clean Cities Coalition (H-GCCC)-August 11, 2021 @9:30AM

If you would like to attend any meeting, please reach out to Andrew DeCandis at [Andrew.DeCandis@h-gac.com](mailto:Andrew.DeCandis@h-gac.com) for the meeting link.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ITEM 6A.**

None

Next meeting: August 26, 2021

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 11:09A.M.