

# REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, February 24, 2022 – 10:00 A. M.  
Houston-Galveston Area Council  
Virtual Teams Meeting

<p><b><u>MEMBER PRESENT</u></b>                  City of Houston – Win Colbert                  City of Houston – Nguyen Ly                  Environmental Defense Fund – Grace Lewis                  Fort Bend County – Joel Patterson                  Harris County, Precinct 2 – Kristen Lee                  Houston County Pollution Control – Latrice Babin                  American Lung Association – Charlie Gagen</p>	<p><b><u>ALTERNATE PRESENT</u></b>                  Port Houston– Kenneth Gathright                  Houston Advanced Research Center – Ebrahim Eslami                  Harris County Pollution Control – Stuart Mueller                  METRO – Vincent Sanders                  Associated General Contractors of America– Marc Anderson                  TxDOT– Charles Airiohuodion                  City of LaPorte – Johnny Morales                  City of Houston – Darryl Tate</p>
<p><b><u>OTHERS PRESENT</u></b>                  Environmental Defense Fund – Tammy Thompson                  AECOM - Bradley Flowers</p>	<p><b><u>STAFF PRESENT</u></b>                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Andrew DeCandis                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Ben Finley                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Craig Raborn                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cameron Stawicki                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cassandra Marshall                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carrie Evans                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Althea Edwards                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cameron Stawicki                  Environmental Protection Agency – Jeffrey Riley                  TCEQ – Graham Bates                  TCEQ – Jamie Zech                  TCEQ – Nate Hickman</p>

**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. Introduction**

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

**ITEM 1B. Approval of Meeting Summary (9-30-21, 12-09-21& 01-27-22)**

Quorum not met. Meeting summary approval will be postponed until the next RAQPAC meeting.

**AGENCY REPORTS**

## **ITEM 2A. EPA Update (Jeffrey Riley)**

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

### **Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities**

Pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP), EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning & Standards (OAQPS) announced on 12/13/2021 the availability of funds and began soliciting applications from eligible entities to conduct ambient air monitoring of pollutants of greatest concern in communities with environmental and health outcome disparities stemming from pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic. EPA will award funds to support community and local efforts to monitor their own air quality and to promote air quality monitoring partnerships between communities and tribal, state, and local governments. For more information, see: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-communities>

The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$20,000,000.

Approximately \$2 million dollars of this amount will be awarded to tribal governments under a tribal government set-aside, and approximately \$2 million will be awarded to eligible community-based organizations under a community-based organization set-aside.

On February 11, EPA extended the American Rescue Plan Community Air Pollution Monitoring Grant Competition application deadline to March 25, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. (ET). This is a 30-day extension from the original 2/25 closing date for applications, EPA issued this 30-day extension in response to requests for more time to submit applications.

### **Draft US Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2020**

On February 15, EPA announced the availability of the public review draft of the 1990-2020 Inventory of US Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks. The public review draft is made available on EPA's website for 30 days (March 17).

Since the early 1990s, EPA develops this inventory annually that tracks U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and sinks by source, economic sector, and greenhouse gas going back to 1990. Publication of the draft report each February allows for public comment prior to publishing the final report by April 15 of this year. Inventory is submitted to the United Nations in accordance with the Framework Convention on Climate Change. For more information, see: <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/inventory-usgreenhouse-gas-emissions-and-sinks>

### **2021 Emissions report**

On February 18, the Clean Air Markets Division within the Office of Atmospheric Programs released publicly available, annual data on 2021 emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOX), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), and mercury from power plants in the lower 48 states. Emissions in 2021 were higher than 2020, reflecting a 16% increase in coal-fired electricity generation as COVID restrictions eased and economic activity recovered. However, compared to 2019, 2021 emissions fell between 3% and 11% reflecting the long-standing trend of decreasing annual emissions.

For more information, see: <https://www.epa.gov/airmarkets/power-plant-emission-trends>

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

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

### **Modeling Platform Files Release**

- The TCEQ Released the preliminary version of the modeling files from 2019 modeling platform. The release includes:
- 2019, 2023, and 2026 meteorological files for CAMx
- 2019, 2023, and 2026 IC/BC/TC inputs for CAMx
- 2019, 2023, and 2026 emissions inputs for CAMx
- The parties interested in obtaining the files should use an FTP client software such as Firezilla to access our public FTB site:

- FTP address: [amdaftp.tceq.texas.gov](http://amdaftp.tceq.texas.gov)
- FTP directory: /TXO3/camx/input
- User ID: anonymous
- Password: user's email address
- Comments and questions about the files can be sent via e-mail to [amda@tceq.gov](mailto:amda@tceq.gov) with a subject line containing "2019 Modeling Platform Comments."

#### **ITEM 2C. TERP Update (Nate Hickman)**

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

We are into the second quarter for our grants. We are getting ready to open a fifth grant program.

##### **Programs that have opened and closed are:**

- **Volkswagen Environmental Litigation Grant Program**-This program for DCFC fast chargers. This was a popular program we received more application than funding available. We expect more than 41 new DCFC station across areas of Texas that will be able to help fund.

##### **Programs that are currently open:**

- **Light Duty Purchase Motor Vehicle Incentive Program**-A lot of interest so far. We have provided lease for more than 200 vehicles in this program already. This will be open until January 2023 or until fund availability runs out. This program offers \$2500 on electric and \$5000 on natural gas light duty vehicle.
- **C4 Rail Yard Area Emission Reduction Program**-Open until November 2022 first come/first serve basis for the replacement of heavy-duty equipment and C4 Rail Yard in the state if funding is available.
- **Texas Clean School Bus Program**-There is a lot of interest for this program. We are working with a lot of school districts to help promote funding. This is open until October 2022 or until funding is no longer available.
- **Alternative Fueling Facilities Program**-This program should be the next one to open in early March 2022. We posted a request for comment on some proposed criteria. We have opened this program over the past biennium. Generally, it can help fund half the cost going into building a new CNG/LNG propane station or electric station for level 2 chargers.

In the last biennium we show an increase demand in level 2 chargers under that program, and we expect more recently with the movement for DC fast chargers and what we saw under VW. Possibly some big demands for DC fast chargers under that program now as well. Which will be a bit of a change from previous biennium for demand in that program.

We have released some criteria based on lesson learned from VW program on what we would like to do with the TERP funding there. I encourage all of you to visit our web page. The request for comment is posted there in English and Spanish. Accepting comments until March 4 for thoughts on that program.

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

Since our last meeting in January, there have been no exceedances of the 2008 75 ppb ground level ozone standard or the 2015 70ppb standard. So far this year, the region maximum 4<sup>th</sup> highest value is 54ppb located at the Galveston 99<sup>th</sup> street monitor. Current region design value for the 2020-2022 period is 67ppb as measured at the Houston Bayland Park monitoring station.

Moving on to the final PM 2.5 average in January at the Clinton Road monitor was 9.76 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. So far in February the PM 2.5 at the same station is 2.83 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

Additionally, all information from today's meeting can be found and downloaded from the RAQPAC website.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

**ITEM 3A.** (Andrew DeCandis)

None

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**ITEM 4A. Overview of the EDF Air Tracker Tool** (Tammy Thompson)

Tammy Thompson gave an overview to the members on the Air Tracker Tool. Environmental Defense Fund and Google have partnered with google street view cars. Discussion continued that air quality monitors were placed in google street view cars and drove the streets many times in the course of the year to measure air pollution at a hyper local level. The results determined there is a lot of variability at a hyper level scale in the neighborhood. One end of a block could have air pollution concentration eight times higher than the other end. It was pointed out, the goal is not just to understand the variability, but to understand what is causing it.

Discussion continued with modeling air pollution. It was further discussed that you typically think about starting at the source and you use the models to estimate air pollution. Basically, air pollution is carried with the wind and you end up with concentration on surfaces and understanding what that might look like over a large scale.

The air tracker will start at a location of interest and work backwards. People may be concerned about what they are breathing. We want to look to find the source area. If there is high pollution measurement somewhere this tool will start at that location and look to identify the source area. It was noted that this is an example of mobile measuring when a car is driving and finds a spike in air pollution.

In closing, the members were made aware of the model called STILT driven by the high-resolution rapid refresh HRRR weather model from NOAA. By using this, they are basically following air parcels in backward time. By beginning at the location, you look at the wind, speed, direction, and turbulence in that location at that time and you step backwards. The members were informed you do this repeatedly from that information and draw basically an outline of the affected area using just this model.

This technology is being used in real time in three cities across the United States. The cities that were chosen are Houston, Salt Lake City, and Pittsburg. It was indicated that cities can be added and removed at any time. The next step in this is to define the domain box.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

A. PM 2.5 Advance Subcommittee Meeting: March 15, 2022 at 1:00p.m.

B. Texas Energy Summit is having a Conference in Austin **Wednesday-Friday** -which focuses on energy with an air quality perspective. There are some free passes for government and nonprofit employees. If you would like more information, please visit [texasenergysummit.com](http://texasenergysummit.com)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ITEM 6A.**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ITEM 7A.**

Next meeting: March 31, 2022

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 11:04 A.M.