

REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, February 26, 2026 – 10:00 A. M.
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Virtual Teams Meeting

<p><u>MEMBER'S PRESENT</u> Harris County – Winifred Hamilton Harris County – Doug Peterson Environmental Defense Fund– Grace Lewis City of Houston–Nguyen Ly Air Alliance Houston–Jennifer Hadayia TXDOT–Qing Li HARC–Carlos Gamarra American Lung Association–Charlie Gagen Waller County–Brooke Bacuetes Harris County Pollution Control–Latrice Babin</p>	<p><u>ALTERNATE PRESENT</u> METRO–Kenneth McGaughey Air Alliance Houston–Inyang Uwak Harris County Pollution Control–Stuart Mueller City of LaPorte–Johnny Morales Port Houston–Darryl Tate League Of Women Voters–Katie Campbell -Shumway</p>
<p><u>OTHERS PRESENT</u> HARC–Meredith Jennings EDF – Maia Draper Joshua McConnell Naiyeh McDaniel Sarav Arunachalam Carrie Evans Catherine Seppan</p>	<p><u>STAFF PRESENT</u> Houston-Galveston Area Council – Pharr Andrews Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cassandra Marshall Houston-Galveston Area Council – Ben Finley Houston-Galveston Area Council – Marcus Tucker Houston-Galveston Area Council – Vinny Polignano Houston-Galveston Area Council – Yetunde Oyewale Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlos Lugo Houston-Galveston Area Council –Ayo Jibowu Houston-Galveston Area Council –Ebrahim Eslami Houston-Galveston Area Council –Bennie Chambers Houston-Galveston Area Council –Madeline Statkewicz Houston-Galveston Area Council –Jackie Pittman Houston-Galveston Area Council –Qun Zhao Houston-Galveston Area Council –Fan Yang EPA– Jeff Riley TERP– Ron Heiser TCEQ – Vanessa De Arman TCEQ – Rachel Melton TCEQ – Emily Wagoner TCEQ – Denine Calvin TCEQ – Alison Stokes</p>

BRIEFING

Overview

- a. RAQPAC Members and Alternates were presented with agency reports (EPA Update, TCEQ Update, and Regional Air Quality Monitoring update), and the meeting concluded with information items and no 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

Grace Lewis called the meeting to order, and members were introduced.

ITEM 2A. Approval of Meeting Summary (1/29/2026)

Meeting summary held for quorum.

AGENCY REPORTS

ITEM 3A. EPA Update – (Jeff Riley, EPA)

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

2024 Annual PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standard – Designations/Implementation

On March 12, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin issued an [announcement](#) that the agency will undertake 31 deregulatory actions affecting a variety of sectors of the economy. Among the 31 deregulatory actions identified:

- Reconsideration of [EPA’s February 7, 2024, strengthening of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter \(PM NAAQS\)](#), setting the level of the primary (health-based) annual PM2.5 standard at 9.0 micrograms per cubic meter to provide increased public health protection, consistent with the available health science.

The Administrator’s announcement represents a statement of agency priorities for this administration, and a “path forward”. Since the March 12 announcement, EPA has issued no policy statements, press releases or other communications on status of the 2024 PM2.5 NAAQS.

A lawsuit filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit (DC Circuit) by Kentucky’s attorney general and 23 other state attorneys general in March 2024 to block implementation of the strengthened NAAQS could soon provide a status update on the NAAQS. The case has been fully briefed on both sides, and oral argument was back in December 2024.

More recently, on September 4, 2025, the DC Circuit granted EPA’s request for an additional 45-day abeyance in the PM2.5 NAAQS litigation, directing EPA to file motions to govern further proceedings by October 20. The Federal government shutdown October 1-November 13 delayed EPA’s timely filing; on November 24 EPA filed a motion for the court to vacate the 2024 PM2.5 NAAQS final rule instead of keeping the case in abeyance. In the motion, EPA argues that the final rule should be vacated because EPA’s review of the NAAQS was not based on the latest scientific knowledge & used the same materials as the Agency’s December 2020 decision to retain the level of the 2012 PM2.5 NAAQS.

Environmental groups oppose EPA’s motion for vacatur and filed to extend the responsive filing deadline to December 16, 2025. EPA will share information on reconsideration of the 2024 annual PM2.5 NAAQS as it becomes available.

Reconsideration of Ozone Reclassification Requirements Rule (O3RSR) “Leftover” SIPs Policy

On June 3, EPA announced reconsideration of the January 2025 *“State Implementation Plan Submittal Deadlines and Implementation Requirements for Reclassified Nonattainment Areas Under the Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards”* final rule. In a supplemental [September 15 announcement](#), EPA clarified that the subject of reconsideration is the “leftover” SIPs requirements; unresolved requirements applicable to a nonattainment area’s former classification after the area is reclassified.

This reconsideration relates to SIP elements for a lower nonattainment classification the state must still submit to EPA upon a nonattainment area’s reclassification to a higher classification (Moderate, Serious, etc.) There could be some significance to transportation partners if motor vehicle emissions budgets (MVEBs) in attainment demonstration SIPs or RFP SIPs are determined to no longer be required for lower classifications. Further, EPA’s reconsideration may also impact highway sanctions for situations like EPA findings of failure to submit, etc.

EPA is currently developing a proposed reconsideration rule & anticipates signature Q1-Q2 2026.

Reconsideration of the 2009 Endangerment Finding and Greenhouse Gas Vehicle Standards

On July 29, 2025, EPA [proposed to rescind](#) the 2009 GHG Endangerment Finding and repeal all GHG emission standards for light-duty, medium-duty, and heavy-duty vehicles and engines. The Endangerment Finding is a prerequisite for regulating emissions from new motor vehicles and new motor vehicle engines. Absent this finding, EPA lacks statutory authority under Section 202 of the Clean Air Act to prescribe standards for GHG emissions. Therefore, EPA has also proposed to repeal GHG regulations for light-, medium-, and heavy-duty on-highway vehicles. The [proposed rule](#) “Reconsideration of the 2009 Endangerment Finding and Greenhouse Gas Vehicle Standards” was published in the Federal Register August 1, the public comment period was [extended](#) to September 22.

The main transportation conformity-related concern of the repeal relates to EPA’s definition of the “most current” version of EPA’s MOVES mobile source emissions model: MOVES4 includes the 2022 heavy-duty engine/vehicle standards, MOVES5 includes the 2024 light & medium-duty multipollutant rule & the heavy-duty GHG emissions Phase 3 rule. If these standards are repealed, MOVES4/MOVES5 may no longer reflect the current applicable motor vehicle emissions standards. To date, EPA OTAQ has not indicated plans to revise the MOVES model or change policy for model version use in response to the July proposed reconsideration; such plans will likely depend upon the details of the final GHG vehicle standards rulemaking; we anticipate signature of the final rule Q1-Q2 2026.

ITEM 2B. TCEQ Update – (Vanessa DeArman, TCEQ)

TCEQ staff gave an update to the members on the latest information:

Revisions to 30 Texas Administration Code (TAC) Chapter 17 Tax Relief for Property Used for Environmental Protection and Chapter 18 Voter-Approval Tax Rate Relief for Pollution Control Requirements

Revisions to Chapter 17 and 18 were adopted by the commission on January 28, 2026. All applications for a Use Determination for Pollution Control Property must be submitted electronically using TCEQ’s [State of Texas Environmental Electronic Reporting System \(STEERS\)](#) (<https://www3.tceq.texas.gov/steers/>) beginning February 17, 2026, the effective date of the rule.

For more information on revisions made, please visit the [Rule Adoptions](#) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/rules/adopt.html>).

TCEQ Emissions Inventory (EI) Completed EI to be Submitted by March 31, 2026

Point Source EIs are due March 31, 2026.

For sites subject to 30 TAC §101.10, a completed EI is required to be submitted to TCEQ by March 31, 2026, or as directed by the commission. Emissions inventories must be submitted electronically through TCEQ’s [STEERS](#). However, if the site is not subject to 30 TAC §101.10, a rule inapplicability notification letter may be mailed in lieu of a STEERS submittal.

For questions, please contact the EI program at psinvent@tceq.texas.gov or at 512-239-1773.

Emissions Banking and Trading (EBT) Updated Guidance Document for STEERS

The EBT team is pleased to announce that an updated guidance document for [STEERS](#) is now available on the [EBT](#) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/banking>). Owners/operators of regulated sources or brokers who participate in the EBT Programs should submit applications electronically through STEERS.

For questions, please contact EBT at ebt@tceq.texas.gov.

TCEQ’s Annual Environmental Trade Fair and Conference (ETFC) Returns May 19-20, 2026

Registration is now open for TCEQ’s 2026 ETFC, which will be held May 19-20, 2026, at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio.

TCEQ will lead more than 100 courses and discussions at this year’s ETFC. Topics will focus on air and water permitting, industrial, and solid waste management, compliance and enforcement, remediation programs, and more. For more information about ETFC, and to register, please visit the [ETFC](#) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/etfc/etf.html>).

Texas Environmental Excellence Awards (TEEA) on June 9, 2026

TCEQ is honored to host the TEEA on June 9, 2026, at the Bullock Texas State History Museum.

For more information, please visit the [TEEA Banquet](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/teea/texas-environmental-excellence-awards-banquet) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/teea/texas-environmental-excellence-awards-banquet>).

ITEM 2C. TERP Update (*Ron Heiser, TERP*)

TERP staff gave an update to the members on the latest information:

Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP)

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- To date, TCEQ has successfully opened 3 grant programs: the [Light-Duty Program \(LDPLIP\)](#), the [Alternative Fueling Facilities Program \(AFFP\)](#), and the [Texas Clean School Bus Program \(TCSB\)](#). AFFP has already closed.
- **Closing Soon:**
 - The **Light Duty Program** is still accepting applications for vehicles powered by natural gas until the program officially closes March 6, 2026.
 - The **TCSB Program** is still accepting applications until May 22, 2026, or until acceptance of applications for funding is suspended.
- **Coming Soon:**
 - The [Rebate Grants Program](#) is still on track to open in late-April or early-May, 2026. The Rebate Program provides grants in the Texas nonattainment areas and affected counties to upgrade or replace on-road heavy-duty diesel vehicles and select heavy-duty diesel non-road equipment.
 - The [Emissions Reduction Incentive Grants Program \(ERIG\)](#) is still on track to open in late-April or early-May, 2026. ERIG will provide grants in Texas non-attainment areas and affected counties for locomotives, marine vessels, stationary equipment, or non-road equipment.
 - The [New Technology Implementation Grant Program \(NTIG\)](#) is expected to open in late-May or early-June, 2026. NTIG provides funding to assist in implementing new technologies that reduce emissions of regulated pollutants from facilities and other stationary sources.
 - The [Texas Natural Gas Vehicle Grants Program \(TNGVGP\)](#) is expected to open in late-July or early-August, 2026. TNGVGP provides funding to cover up to 90% of the cost to replace or repower heavy-duty vehicles with vehicles and engines powered by CNG, LNG, or LPG.
 - The [Seaport and Rail Yard Areas Emissions Reduction Program \(SPRY\)](#) is expected to open in early- to mid-August, 2026. The SPRY program provides grants for upgrading or replacing older drayage and container handling equipment operating in seaports and rail yards in eligible Texas counties.
 - The [Texas Hydrogen Infrastructure, Vehicle, and Equipment Grant Program \(THIVE\)](#) is expected to open early to mid-August, 2026. THIVE will provide grants in Texas nonattainment areas and affected counties for hydrogen vehicles, equipment, and refueling infrastructure.
 - More projected grant openings will be announced in the coming RAQPAC meetings as the rollouts become clearer.
- Visit the [TERP main website](#) to view Project Summary Reports (by grant program) dating back to 2001. Also view the most recent Annual and Biennial Reports to the Texas Legislature. All reports can be found under the **Reports & Publications** dropdown menu at the top of the page.
- Visit the [TERP main website](#) to see all TERP Grant Programs and their respective requirements by selecting the ‘**Explore Grants**’ dropdown at the top of the page and choosing ‘**By Program Name**’;
- Sign up for the **TERP Hot Topics** email list to get the latest information on new program openings and other announcements by visiting the [TERP main website](#) and scrolling to the bottom of the page and selecting **Subscribe**. Contact TERP staff by phone at (800) 919-TERP (8377) or by email at terp@tceq.texas.gov.

Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Plan (TxVEMP) Program (No updates since last meeting)

The TxVEMP All-Electric Grant Program application period has been extended to August 31, 2026:

- The [TxVEMP All-Electric Grant Program](#) still has approximately \$30 million in available funding to upgrade or replace qualifying vehicles and equipment operating in eligible areas with new electric models. Grants can reimburse up to:
 - 100% of the cost for government entities
 - 75% of the incremental cost for non-government entities
- Eligible project categories include the replacement or repower of:
 - Class 8 Local Freight Trucks and Port Drayage Trucks
 - Class 4-8 School Bus, Shuttle Bus, or Transit Bus
 - Class 4-7 Local Freight Trucks
 - Airport Ground Support Equipment
 - Forklifts and Port Cargo Handling Equipment
 - Applicants purchasing on-road vehicles or non-road equipment may request additional funding for electric charging or hydrogen refueling infrastructure.

Sign up for TxVEMP updates to learn more about this program. Please contact us at 1-800-919-8377 or VWsettle@tceq.texas.gov with any questions. Visit www.txvwfund.org for the latest information and other announcements, as well as program requirements, application forms, and project summary reports.

Texas Voluntary Marginal Conventional Well Plugging Program (TxMCW)

- **Update:** The TxMCW is hoping to release their Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) as well as their Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a vendor to do the methane measurements for potential eligible projects.
- **Background**
 - May 8, 2024: TCEQ received \$134 million in grant funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) – Methane Emissions Reduction Program (MERP) for Mitigating Emissions from Marginal Conventional Wells (MCWs), overseen by the Department of Energy (DOE) / National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL).
- **Program Description**
 - TCEQ is implementing the MERP grant through TxMCW, a program that will cover the costs of measuring methane emissions at participating well sites and plugging those wells.
 - At an estimated \$60,000 and \$120,000 per well, TCEQ may award between 1,000 and 2,000 grants for qualifying wells in Texas over a four-year program period.
 - TxMCW program development is still underway.
- **Upcoming Events**
 - TxMCW Presentation at the TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair and Conference, May 19, 2026, held at the Henry B. Gozalez Convention Center, 900 E. Market Street, San Antonio, TX 78205.

Visit the [TxMCW webpage](#) for the latest program information, and [sign up for updates](#) to learn more about this program, or contact us directly via email, at TxMCW@tceq.texas.gov.

ITEM 2D. Regional Air Quality Monitoring Update— (Vinny Polignano, H-GAC)

Staff presented the February air quality monitoring update, reporting no ozone exceedances in January or February to date and noting that the Galveston 99th Street monitor recorded the highest average of daily maximum eight-hour ozone concentrations during the period reviewed. He shared tentative ozone design values indicating preliminary 2025 levels may be around eighty, pending final QA/QC. February monitoring reflected typical seasonal conditions, with PM2.5 driving moderate AQI days, while some hotspot indicators were observed at certain monitors and QA/QC is ongoing for a new PM2.5 monitor. He explained that PM2.5 currently drives the region’s maximum AQI values, though ozone is expected to play a larger role in spring and summer, and noted plans to include additional meteorological components and a new percent change metric in future updates to highlight monitors with the largest changes.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM 4A. TRAPPA-DFW Transportation Policy AQ Impact Assessment Tool Overview - (Maia Draper, EDF)

The meeting featured a presentation by Saurabh on the Transportation Air Pollution Policy Assessment Tool (TRAPA), which is designed to rapidly evaluate the air quality, health, and equity impacts of on-road transportation policies. TRAPA applies a full chain assessment framework that links transportation planning outputs to emissions modeling using MOVES, air quality dispersion through eTools, exposure estimation, health impact analysis via COBRA, and tract-level equity evaluation. The presenters described eTools, a web-based dispersion modeling platform developed with EPA vetting that can stimulate line, area, and point sources, combining local and transported emissions along with precursor chemistry to estimate total PM 2.5 changes. Case results highlighted high -resolution baseline PM2.5 and NO2, patterns and demonstrated a New York City medium-and heavy -duty truck electrification scenario, which produced spatially heterogeneous pollutant reductions, NO2 reductions were responsible for most of the estimated mortality and asthma benefits. The team also reviewed the tools evolution from the zip code-based ZAPA to tract level TRAPA, its deployment in Dallas Fort Worth, and its expansion to the statewide CHAPPA application in New York used by agencies to evaluate policy co-benefits. During the Q & A, presenters noted that TRAPA is a reduced form model optimized for annual average of PM2.5 and NO2, includes algorithms to convert NOx and NO2, and account for non-exhaust PM emissions from tires, brakes, and road dust using MOVES factors, but currently does not model ozone or short-term pollution events.

H-GAC INFORMATION ITEMS

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

None

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

ITEM 6A. Houston Advance Research Center (Carlos Gamarra and Meredith Jennings, HARC)

Representatives from the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC) presented an overview of their sustainability and air quality initiatives, highlighting their role as a nonpartisan research organization focused on air, energy, water, and resilience. The presentation covered their collaboration with the Houston-Galveston Area Council on the 13-county Clean Air Action Plan, which identifies emissions sources and reduction strategies across sectors. They also discussed the \$15 million “4S Tree” program funded by the United States Forest Service, which aims to plant or distribute nearly 55,000 trees in Harris County, provide workforce training, and remove hazardous trees while quantifying environmental benefits using the i-Tree. Additional updates included HARC’s leadership of a United States Department of Energy funded onsite energy technical assistance program supporting clean energy adoption and emissions reductions across multiple states, along with industrial energy efficiency assessments through the industrial Training and Assessment Centers program. Future research efforts will examine air quality impacts of data centers, black carbon pollution forecasting in the Houston region, orphan wells, and expanded community air monitoring and mitigation strategies.

MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

ITEM 7A. Updates from Members

Grace Lewis asked attendees to submit questions in the chat for follow-up at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 8A.

Next meeting: March 26, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 A.M.