

# REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, January 29, 2026 – 10:00 A. M.  
Houston-Galveston Area Council  
Virtual Teams Meeting

<p><b><u>MEMBER'S PRESENT</u></b>                  Harris County – Winifred Hamilton                  Harris County – Doug Peterson                  EHCMA – Mary Jane Mudd                  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                  Liberty County–Richard Brown</p>	<p><b><u>ALTERNATE PRESENT</u></b>                  METRO–Kenneth McGaughey                  Air Alliance Houston–Inyang Uwak                  Harris County Pollution Control–Stuart Mueller                  City of LaPorte–Johnny Morales                  Port Houston–Kenneth Gathright</p>
<p><b><u>OTHERS PRESENT</u></b>                  Sabine Hodge                  EDF – Maia Draper                  Carlos Gamarra                  Sarav Arunachalam                  C. Seppan                  Daniela Tower</p>	<p><b><u>STAFF PRESENT</u></b>                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Andrew DeCandis                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Pharr Andrews                  Houston-Galveston Area Council – Andrew DeCandis                  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                  TERP– Ron Hieser                  TCEQ – Vanessa De Arman                  TCEQ – Denine Calvin                  TCEQ – Alison Stokes                  TXDOT – Brenda Bustillos</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 (10/30/2025)**

Meeting summary approved.

## **AGENCY REPORTS**

### **ITEM 2A. 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:

#### **Two New Air Monitoring Sites in Houston**

As discussed during the October RAQPAC meeting, two new air monitoring sites have been activated in Houston.

1. Houston Finnigan Park: monitoring PM<sub>2.5</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, volatile organic compounds by canister, wind, and outdoor temperature.
2. Houston Pleasantville Elementary: monitoring PM<sub>2.5</sub>, volatile organic compounds by canister, wind, and outdoor temperature.

For more information, please visit TCEQ’s [GeoTAM](https://tceq.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ab6f85198bda483a997a6956a8486539) webpage (<https://tceq.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ab6f85198bda483a997a6956a8486539>).

### **Mass Emissions Cap and Trade (MECT) and Highly Reactive Volatile Organic Compounds Cap and Trade (HECT) Programs**

Allowance trades for 2025 compliance with the MECT and HECT Programs are due by January 30, 2026. Trades must be submitted electronically through the [State of Texas Environmental Electronic Reporting System \(STEERS\)](https://www3.tceq.texas.gov/steers/) (<https://www3.tceq.texas.gov/steers/>).

STEERS is also accepting 2025 MECT and HECT Annual Reports submissions for 2025 compliance by March 31, 2026.

For more information, please visit the [Emissions Banking and Trading Programs](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/banking) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/banking>) and for questions, please contact [ebt@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:ebt@tceq.texas.gov).

### **TCEQ Emissions Inventory (EI) Workshop on February 5, 2026**

TCEQ will be hosting a virtual EI Workshop on February 5, 2026. The workshop will cover updates for the upcoming 2025 reporting year, basic terms and concepts, guidance for estimating emissions from equipment leak fugitive emissions sources, and web-EI reporting.

Registration is currently open. For more information, please visit the [Emissions Inventory Workshop](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/industrialemissionsinventoryworkshop) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/industrialemissionsinventoryworkshop>).

### **TCEQ Air Permits Division (APD) Updates**

APD has updated and consolidated all the registration application workbooks, PI-1S-CBP, for air quality standard permits for concrete batch plants (6004), concrete batch plants with enhanced controls (6008), and temporary public works projects (6024) into version 8.0. The PI-1S-CBP version 8.0 is required for all registration applications for these permits submitted on or after February 6, 2026. For more information and to access the

workbooks, please visit the [Mechanical section of the Air Permits New Source Review](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/newsourcereview/mechanical) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/newsourcereview/mechanical>).

The APD has updated the Aggregate Processing Operations Workbook to Version 2.0 for all Permits by Rule (PBRs) registrations under Chapter 106, Subchapter E. Version 2.0 is required to be submitted for Subchapter E PBRs starting April 1, 2026. The workbook can be found on the [Air PBRs of Subchapter E](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/permitbyrule/subchapter-e/index.html) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/permitbyrule/subchapter-e/index.html>).

The APD has also released Version 7.0 of the Form PI-1 General Application. Versions 6.0 and 6.1 will continue to be accepted until June 1, 2026. For more information including a list of changes, please visit the [New Source Review Application Tools](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/guidance/newsourcereview/nsrapp-tools.html) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/guidance/newsourcereview/nsrapp-tools.html>).

### **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](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/etfc/etf.html) 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)**

Ron reported during the October funding cycle, TCEQ opened three grant programs, the Light Duty Program, the Alternative Fueling Facilities Program (AFFP), and the Texas Clean School Bus Program (TCSB) all of which experienced high demand. The Light-Duty Program received more than 2,300 applications totaling \$5.6 million; the electric vehicle rebate portion has been suspended after exceeding the statutory cap of 2,000 applications, though applications for natural gas vehicles will continue to be accepted until March 6. The AFFP closed on January 20 after receiving 142 applications requesting over \$40 million against \$12 million in available funding, and applications are currently being evaluated with award announcements expected in the coming weeks. The TCSB Program remains open, having received over 100 applications totaling more than \$35 million against an initial projected \$12 million, and will continue accepting applications until May 22 or until funding is suspended. Looking ahead, TCEQ expects to open its flagship Rebate Grants Program and the Emissions Reduction Incentive Program (ERIG) simultaneously in late April or early May, while the Texas Hydrogen Infrastructure Vehicle and Equipment Grant Program has been delayed to late summer or early fall. No updates were reported for the Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program, which still has approximately \$30 million available, or for the Texas Voluntary Marginal Conventional Well Program, which remains in development.

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

The January air quality monitoring updated showed seasonally low ozone activity, with zero ozone exceedance days in December and January and fewer total exceedances across most monitors in 2025 compared to 2024. Tentative ozone design values for 2025 appear comparable to 2024, with no indication of significant increases. PM<sub>2.5</sub> trends continue to be driven by short term events, most notably a hazardous spike on January 1 due to fireworks, while several monitors remain at or near the 2012 annual standard of 12 ug/m<sup>3</sup> and others continue to trend upward. Overall AQI improved in late fall and winter, with more moderate and good days compared to the summer ozone season, reflecting the expected seasonal shift in dominant pollutants.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **ITEM 4**

#### **A. TXDOT ConnectSmart Update - (Brenda Bustillos, Phd. PE Texas Department of Transportation)**

Brenda presented an overview of ConnectSmart, an advanced regional transportation technology platform developed through a USDOT Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment grant, highlighting its role in improving safety, reducing congestion, improving air quality, and promoting equitable access to transportation options. The ConnectSmart mobile app integrates real-time traffic, transit, parking, flood warnings, trip planning, carpooling telework tracking, and user incentives into a single platform designed to connect travelers with regional transportation infrastructure and services. Through behavioral economics, user engagement tools, and incentives, the program encourages shifts away from single-occupancy vehicle travel toward more sustainable modes. Program metrics to date show over 188,000 vehicle miles not driven, resulting in measurable reductions in vehicle miles traveled, Co2 emissions, and user costs, demonstrating the platform's contribution to regional congestion management and air quality goals.

#### **B. TRAPPA DFW-Transportation Policy AQ Impact Assessment Tool Overview - (Maia Draper, EDF)**

Maia briefly introduced a collaborative project with the University of North Carolina and NCTCOG that resulted in the development of an interactive air quality modeling tool for the Dallas Fort Worth region, designed to evaluate localized air quality impacts of transportation policy and vehicle activity changes. The UNC team demonstrated how the tool allows users to quickly model what if scenarios such as changes in traffic volume, vehicle types, fuel transitions, and off network emissions and view resulting PM2-5 and NO2 concentration changes at the census tract level. The tool integrates roadway, traffic, and emissions data with dispersion modeling to provide rapid, user-friendly analysis without requiring specialized technical expertise. Staff expressed interest in gathering feedback on the tool and exploring opportunities to adapt to a similar approach for the Houston region, with follow-up conversations encouraged.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

Staff shared a brief update announcing two new additions to the H-GAC air quality team since the last meeting. Madeline Statkewicz joined in late November as a Senior Planner and will lead transportation conformity efforts while supporting internal and partner coordination on emission reduction strategies. More recently, Ebrahim Eslami, formerly a long time RAQPAC member, joined as a Principal Planner and will lead the agency's efforts along with additional program responsibilities. With these hires, the policy side of the air quality team is now fully staffed, and staff expressed enthusiasm about upcoming planning efforts over the next several years.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **ITEM 6A.**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **ITEM 7A.**

Next meeting: February 26, 2026

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 A.M.