

# REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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## MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, December 08, 2022 – 10:00 A. M.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Virtual Teams Meeting

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### MEMBER PRESENT

City of Houston – Win Colbert  
Fort Bend County – Joel Patterson  
Harris County Pollution Control – Latrice Babin  
Environmental Defense Fund – Grace Lewis  
American Lung Association – Charlie Gagen  
Regional Interest – Gary Scoggin  
Waller County – Brooke Bacuetes

### ALTERNATE PRESENT

TxDOT – Charles Airiohudion  
Houston Advanced Research Center – Ebrahim Eslami  
METRO – Vincent Sanders  
Port Houston – Kenneth Gathright

### OTHERS PRESENT

### STAFF PRESENT

Houston-Galveston Area Council – Andrew DeCandis  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Ben Finley  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cassandra Marshall  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Veronica Green  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Susan Jaworski  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – James Garland  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Daniel Brassil  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Diane Domagas  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carrie Evans  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Caroline Bailey  
Environmental Protection Agency – Jeff Riley  
TCEQ – Vanessa De Arman  
TCEQ – Nate Hickman  
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 information items and 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 1B. Approval of Meeting Summary (8-25-2022)

Meeting summary held for quorum.

### AGENCY REPORTS

#### ITEM 2A. EPA Update (Jeff Riley)

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

Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee  
December 8, 2022

## **Reconsideration of the EPA’s December 2020 Decision to Retain 2012 Particulate Matter (PM) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)**

On April 14, 2022, EPA announced the availability of the [“Supplement to the 2019 Integrated Science Assessment for Particulate Matter \(Final\)”](#). On May 26, 2022, EPA announced the availability of the [“Policy Assessment for the Reconsideration of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter \(Final\)”](#). The final Policy Assessment (PA) concludes that:

- The scientific evidence and information support revising the level of the annual standard for the PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS to below the current level of 12 ug/m<sup>3</sup> (and down as low as 8 ug/m<sup>3</sup>) while retaining the 24-hour standard
- The scientific evidence and information do not call into question the adequacy of the current Primary PM<sub>10</sub> Standard or PM Secondary Standards

EPA is working with Office of Management & Budget to conclude the interagency review of this proposed decision and anticipates the EPA Administrator will sign the proposed decision in December 2022. The original reconsideration schedule anticipated issuance of a final decision by Spring 2023 – due to a planned 60-day comment period on the proposed decision, it is possible that the final decision may be issued later than Spring 2023. For more information on EPA’s reconsideration of the Decision to Retain the 2012 PM NAAQS, please visit <https://casac.epa.gov>.

## **Reconsideration of the Decision to Retain 2015 Ground-level Ozone NAAQS**

On November 14/15, 2022, the CASAC Ozone Review Panel conducted a [public meeting](#) to discuss the October 25, 2022 Draft CASAC Report on EPA’s 2020 Integrated Science Assessment (ISA) for Ozone and Related Photochemical Oxidants. As a product of this meeting, the Chartered CASAC approved the [Panel’s Final CASAC Report](#) on EPA’s 2020 ISA on November 15, 2022, and the report was submitted to Administrator Regan on November 22, 2022.

Please refer to the CASAC website at <https://casac.epa.gov> for additional details.

## **Heavy-Duty Engine & Vehicle Standards:**

EPA’s [Control of Air Pollution from New Motor Vehicles: Heavy-Duty Engine and Vehicle Standards \(Proposed Rule\)](#) (proposed March 28, 2022) proposed stronger NO<sub>x</sub> and GHG standards to reduce pollution from heavy-duty vehicles and engines starting in MY 2027. The comment period closed May 16<sup>th</sup>, and many stakeholders (including NCTCOG) submitted comments.

EPA originally planned to finalize this rulemaking by December 2022 but has more recently discussed reopening the proposal/issuing a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking to consider more stringent GHG standards for model years 2027 through 2029. This reopening is responsive to the August 2022 passage of the Inflation Reduction Act and the new incentives it contains to speed the adoption of zero-emission vehicles. EPA believes much greater zero-emission vehicle adoption rates are possible for MY 2027 through 2029.

EPA now plans to finalize the NO<sub>x</sub> standards portion of the March 28 proposed rulemaking by end of December 2022, and separately address the more stringent GHG standards with a proposed rule in March 2023 and final rule by the end of December 2023.

As more information on the final NO<sub>x</sub> standards rulemaking & the separate GHG standards rulemaking becomes available, it will be shared with the TWG.

## **Inflation Reduction Act Clean Ports: -**

On December 6, 2022, EPA hosted an Inflation Reduction Act Clean Ports funding listening session from 1-3:00 p.m. Eastern. This was an identical listening session to the session held on November 9, 2022. The IRA provides EPA with \$3 billion to fund zero-emission port equipment and technology and to help ports develop climate action plans to reduce air pollutants at U.S. ports. EPA wants stakeholder feedback on how to best utilize this funding towards those ends. This new funding program will build on EPA’s Ports Initiative that the Agency established to ensure that our

nation's ports, a critical part of our infrastructure and supply chain, help address public health and environmental impacts on surrounding communities.

For more information on these listening sessions, as well as EPA's Clean Ports efforts, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/ports-initiative/events-related-epa-ports-initiative>

**American Rescue Plan Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring Competitive Grant Selections:** ([more info](#)) – Funding selections for the American Rescue Plan Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring competitive grant were made recently, a number of Texas areas (Houston, Port Arthur, CAPCOG in Austin, Lubbock, and the Chamizal community in El Paso) were awarded ~\$500,000 each to utilize towards community monitoring efforts.

**Inflation Reduction Act Non-Regulatory Dockets for Public Input – Provisions for EPA OAR Implementation:** ([more info](#)) – EPA has established several non-regulatory dockets for initial public engagement & input on new and existing programs under the Office of Air & Radiation to achieve reductions in climate pollutants, public health improvements, and reduce pollution in overburdened communities. The dockets are linked to on this informational page and will remain open for comments until January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**EPA Responds to Petitions to Address Locomotive Emissions:** ([more info](#)) – On November 9, 2022, EPA announced its response to petitions from the California Air Resources Board/San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District & other petitioners to address NOx & PM emissions from locomotives. The press release linked to above outlines some aspects of EPA's strategy such as forming a rail study team to evaluate technologies & policy options, coordinating stakeholder engagement on those evaluations, and how Inflation Reduction Act resources could support these efforts. This effort would apply to pollution from both new & currently operating locomotives. As more information on this initiative becomes available, it will be shared with the TWG.

## **ITEM 2B. TCEQ Update (Vanessa De Arman)**

### Status of 2008 Eight-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)

- On October 7, 2022, the EPA reclassified the HGB area from serious to severe nonattainment, effective November 7, 2022.
- TCEQ is required to submit severe area SIP revisions to the EPA by May 7, 2024.
- Attainment date is July 20, 2027, with a 2026 attainment year.

### Status of 2015 Eight-Hour Ozone NAAQS

- On October 7, 2022, the EPA reclassified HGB to moderate nonattainment, effective November 7, 2022.
- Moderate area SIP revisions are due to the EPA by January 1, 2023.
- Attainment date is August 3, 2024, with a 2023 attainment year.

### Emissions Inventory (EI) Workshop

- The TCEQ is hosting the EI Workshop in a 'hybrid' format at the University of Texas Commons Conference Center on January 26, 2023. The workshop will cover updates for the upcoming 2022 reporting year, basic terms and concepts, guidance for estimating emissions from equipment leak fugitive emissions sources, and Web-EI reporting.
- Registration opened November 1, 2022. Workshop details and instructions for registration, are available at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/industrialemissionsinventoryworkshop>.

### 2023 Environmental Trade Fair and Conference (ETFC)

- The ETFC will be held May 16-17, 2023, at the Austin Convention Center. During the two-day ETFC, Agency staff will lead over 100 courses and discussions. Topics include air and water permitting, oil and gas, industrial and solid waste management, compliance and enforcement, and remediation programs.

- Attendee and exhibitor registration is now open. For more information, please visit the Environmental Trade Fair and Conference webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/etfc/etf.html>).

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

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

### **TEXAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION PLAN (TERP) DECEMBER 2022**

- The Light-Duty Motor Vehicle Purchase or Lease Incentive Program (LDPLIP) continues to provide rebates statewide for the purchase or lease of an eligible new light-duty motor vehicle powered by compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), until 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST) on January 7, 2023, or until all available funds have been awarded (*Note: TCEQ is no longer accepting applications for hydrogen fuel cell or other electric-drive (plug-in or plug-in hybrid) vehicles under the program.*)
- The Texas Natural Gas Vehicle Grant Program (TNGVGP) is accepting applications on a first-come, first-served basis until 5:00 pm CST on March 31, 2023. The TNGVGP provides vehicle grants to replace heavy-duty or medium-duty motor vehicles with natural gas vehicles or repower them with natural gas engines. Eligible natural gas fuels include compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG or Propane).
- The Diesel Emissions Reduction Incentive (DERI) Rebate Grants Program is no longer accepting applications. TCEQ has received requests for funding that exceed the funds available under the program.
- The following TERP Programs were also oversubscribed and have closed:
  - Texas Clean School Bus Program
  - Alternative Fueling Facilities Program
  - Texas Clean Fleet Program
  - Seaport and Rail Year Areas Emissions Reduction Program
- The following programs will be opening in 2023:
  - DERI Emissions Reduction Incentive Grants Program
  - New Technology Implementation Grant Program
  - Governmental Alternative Fuel Fleet Program
  - Port Authority Studies and Pilot Program

Visit [www.terpgrants.org](http://www.terpgrants.org) for the latest information on new program openings and other announcements, as well as program requirements, application forms, and project summary reports. Contact TERP staff by phone at (800) 919-TERP (8377) or by email at [terp@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:terp@tceq.texas.gov).

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

Since our last meeting in August, there have been eight exceedances of the 2008 75 ppb ground-level ozone standard and 15 exceedances of the 2015 70 ppb standard.

So far, this year, the region's maximum 4th highest value remains at 84 ppb located at the Houston Bayland Park monitor. Moving on, the current regional design value for the 2020 through 2022 remains at 78 ppb as measured at the Houston Harvard Street monitor and 76 ppb at the Clinton monitor. Compared to previous years, the current design value continues to run lower than what we have seen at this time. Re-read notes and correct

For the year, 2020 to 2022 the Houston design value is 78 ppb as measured at the Houston Bayland Park monitor. This is an increase from last year. Re-read notes and correct

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **ITEM 3A. RAQPAC Vice Chair Election (Grace Lewis)**

To be held until quorum is met.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **ITEM 4A. TCEQ Presentation on Ozone NAAQS SIP Efforts- (Vanessa De Armas, TCEQ)**

Vanessa gave an update on the planning activities for Ozone. Houston Galveston Brazoria has gone through a series of classifications. Discussion continued October 7, 2022 the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reclassified the HGB area from serious to severe nonattainment, effective November 7, 2022. It was further discussed that TCEQ is required to submit severe area SIP revisions to the EPA by May 7, 2024. For the 2015 ozone moderate nonattainment SIP revisions are due to the EPA by January 1. In closing, members were now aware that TCEQ is unable to develop, propose, adopt, or implement new SIP provisions or control measures within this short timeframe given by the EPA. However, staff is in the process of developing the required attainment demonstration and anticipate adoption in November 2023 with submittal by the end of 2023 attainment year.

### **ITEM 4B. Climate Vulnerability Index (Grace Lewis, EDF and Yolanda Prizzi, TTI)**

Grace gave an overview on our mission to preserve natural system on which all life depends. Many of you may or may not be familiar with statuses that are showing. Racial disparity is lower among blacks than whites. What we know is, the climate, environment, and health are all interconnected. Discussion continued that we see the health impact of environmental racism living in an environmental justice neighborhood means that are often experiences the first, worst and longest exposure to pollution. Communities of color often generate less pollution than they are exposed to. Research has shown that exposure to air pollution is associated with chronic diseases like asthma, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, increase risk of low births, and low birth weight infants.

Economic impacts from hospitalization impacts longest in health and vitality of communities. Also, puts a serious complication for COVID-19. Climate change is low in low-income areas in Houston urban areas that lack trees. Discussion continued if we tackle health disparity, we to consider the cause including the role of climate and environment. The Biden administration role is to tackle environmental justice for climate and health disparity to direct those disadvantage communities. Additionally, the Biden administration IJA the infrastructure investment and job act are a one in generation opportunity for state and local government to design and invest in future proof transportation system that embody these goals. It is critical that we get in right MPO's responsible for administering.

Overall, as we work to transform the transportation system, we can create more sustainable, more equitable and more resilient and healthier communities simultaneously. Many of these actions if carefully designed can solve all 4 of these goals. It was further discussed we need a data driven policy planning and thoughtful choices. To do that we can prioritize projects in healthier areas to help create communities. Invest in underserved communities to ensure equity of access to new clan infrastructure design to hold up to impacts. Also, design more sustainable transportation system that reduce vehicles modes traveled, congestion, air quality and health and protect infrastructure to be resilient to climate change.

In closing, one of the things we built off was to identify local climate vulnerabilities on a national scale through a data driven GIS based mapping tool integrating cumulative impacts of climate change, health, and environment. To get feedback we used data sets by assisting decision making policy development resource allocation preparedness, planning ES advocacy and direct funding to those communities. Currently, our paper is under review, while working on an interactive dashboard.

### **ITEM 4C. Draft PM2.5 Advance Report Overview- (Andrew DeCandis, H-GAC)**

Andrew updated the members that we are coming upon our end of path forward 2022. There isn't a draft ready to share today. This is just an overview of where we are at. The PM advance is a volunteer program EPA and local government collaboration with the goal of reducing emission with public health protection positioning areas that are in attainment to remain in attainment. Discussion continued to direct available resources from EPA to region to help address and develop issues. Those regions must submit a path forward report. It was further discussed that we joined in 2013 as part of the program we produce the report every year. This is our 9<sup>th</sup> path forward report. The report doesn't get to deeply in to quantitative. Participation isn't a promise to reduce emissions, but we do want to highlight activities underway in our region. We are working to improve particulate matter in our region. The goal of each measure if possible, we will provide quantitative results if possible. But it is not a requirement. The next steps were discussed to get approval to

submit for review. A draft report will be available, and we are accepting comments and recommendations from RAQPAC members until January 15, 2023. Final approval will be requested at the meeting on January 26.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

- None

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **ITEM 6A.**

- Andrew proposed a question to members to find out their thoughts on returning to in-person meetings. Discussion continued that if each member would let him know their thoughts by the next meeting in January on how they would like to move forward.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **ITEM 7A.**

Next meeting: January 26, 2023

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 11:24 A.M.