

REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, May 29, 2025 – 10:00 A. M.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Virtual Teams Meeting

<u>MEMBER PRESENT</u> Fort Bend County – Joel Patterson Harris County – Winifred Hamilton Harris County – Doug Peterson American Lung Association – Charlie Gagen Environmental Defense Fund– Grace Lewis Houston Advanced Research Center – Ebrahim Eslami Port Houston – Trae Camble Harris County Pollution Control-Latrice Babin Waller County–Brooke Bacuetes City of Houston–Winifred Colbert City of Houston–Nguyen Ly ECHMA–Mary Jane Mudd METRO–Vincent Sanders	<u>ALTERNATE PRESENT</u> Port Houston – Kenneth Gathright METRO –Kenneth McGaughey Harris County Pollution Control–Stuart Mueller ECHMA-Christina Penrose League of Women Voters–Katie Campbell-Shumway City of Houston–Darryl Tate Air Alliance Houston–Inyang Uwak City of LaPorte–Johnny Morales
<u>OTHERS PRESENT</u> Rachel Melton Madeline Statkewicz Jesus Gutierrez David Snyder Eglantine Pauverel-Moss Jorge Gonzalez	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u> Houston-Galveston Area Council – Andrew DeCandis Houston-Galveston Area Council – Pharr Andrews Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cassandra Marshall Houston-Galveston Area Council – Veronica Waller Houston-Galveston Area Council – Vinny Polignano Houston-Galveston Area Council – Yetunde Oyewale Houston-Galveston Area Council – Marcus Tucker Houston-Galveston Area Council – Maggie Isied Houston-Galveston Area Council – Matthew Williams Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlos Lugo Houston-Galveston Area Council – Gloria Brown Houston-Galveston Area Council – Mary Schneider Houston-Galveston Area Council – Robyn Egbert Houston-Galveston Area Council – Eddie Chinae TCEQ – Vanessa DeArman TCEQ – Emily Wagoner TCEQ – Denine Calvin EPA – Jeffrey Riley TXDOT – Qing Li

BRIEFING

Overview

- 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.
- 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

Joel Patterson called the meeting to order, and members were introduced.

ITEM 1B. Approval of Meeting Summary (3/28/2024, 4/25/2024, 6/27/2024, 7/25/2024, 10/31/2024, 12/12/2024 & 1/30/2025, 02/27/2025, & 04/24/2025)

Meeting summaries approved.

AGENCY REPORTS

ITEM 2A. EPA Update – (Jeff Riley)

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

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

On March 12th, 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 12th 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, in late April 2025, EPA filed a motion to the Court requesting an additional 30-day abeyance in the PM2.5 NAAQS litigation. On May 23, the DC Circuit granted EPA’s request to keep this case in abeyance for an additional 30-days, so EPA will need to either file a motion to govern or seek a further abeyance by June 23, 2025. The Court also can issue an opinion at some point even if EPA continues to seek an abeyance.

EPA will share information on reconsideration of the 2024 annual PM2.5 NAAQS as it becomes available.

More information about EPA’s review of the Secondary NO_x/SO_x/PM NAAQS can be found at:

<https://www.epa.gov/so2-pollution/secondary-national-ambient-air-quality-standards-naaqs-nitrogen-dioxide-no2-and>

ITEM 2B. TCEQ Update – (Vanessa DeArman)

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

Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (HGB) 2015 Moderate Eight-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) State Implementation Plan (SIP) Revisions

The revised moderate classification SIP revisions for the 2015 ozone NAAQS were adopted by the commission on March 13, 2025, and submitted to EPA on April 17, 2025.

On April 30, 2025, EPA sent a completeness determination letter and stated the SIP submittals addressed the remaining required moderate area elements which were listed in the October 18, 2023, finding of failure to submit for the HGB area: nonattainment new source review, reasonable further progress (RFP), contingency measures for RFP, reasonably available control technology analysis, and Basic Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance program. As a result of the affirmative completeness determination, the mandatory permitting sanction and highway sanction will not take effect in the HGB nonattainment area, and the mandatory sanctions clock is stopped permanently. A completeness determination does not constitute a finding on the merits of a submission or whether it meets the relevant criteria for

SIP approval. EPA is currently reviewing each SIP revision to determine its approvability and will announce its proposed decision in the *Federal Register*.

The HGB 2015 eight-hour ozone NAAQS SIP documents are available at the [HGB Latest Ozone Planning Activities](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/sip/hgb/hgb-latest-ozone) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/sip/hgb/hgb-latest-ozone>).

Proposed Inspection and Maintenance Program (I/M) SIP and Rule Revisions

On April 17, 2025, the commission approved proposal of the House Bill (HB) 3297 and Senate Bill (SB) 2102 Implementation SIP and corresponding 30 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 114 rule revision.

The proposed SIP and rule revision would implement two bills passed during the 88th Texas Legislature: HB 3297 which eliminated the mandatory annual vehicle safety inspection program for noncommercial vehicles and SB 2102 which extends the initial registration and inspection period for rental vehicles from two to three years.

The public comment period opened on April 22, 2025, and will close on June 3, 2025. A virtual public hearing is scheduled this afternoon, May 29, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., for both the proposed SIP revision and rulemaking. For information on how to submit comments, please visit the [Texas SIP Revisions](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/sip/sipplans.html#prosips) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/sip/sipplans.html#prosips>)

For additional information, please visit the [Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance \(I/M\) Program](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/mobilesource/im.html) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/mobilesource/im.html>).

Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA) Section 185 Penalty Fee: Public Comment Period and Public Hearing for the 2008 Eight-Hour Ozone NAAQS

On May 1, 2025, the commission approved proposal of a TCEQ Section 185 Penalty Fee program specific to the 2008 eight-hour ozone NAAQS as required by the federal Clean Air Act (FCAA). The proposal would create new 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 101, General Air Quality Rules, Subchapter K, Failure to Attain Fee for the 2008 Eight-Hour Ozone Standard and corresponding revisions to the State Implementation Plan.

The [eight-county HGB severe ozone nonattainment area](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/sip/hgb/hgb-status) (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/sip/hgb/hgb-status>) will be subject to the FCAA Section 185 fee if the area fails to attain the 2008 eight-hour ozone NAAQS by July 20, 2027.

The public comment period for the proposed of the [Failure to Attain Fee for the 2008 Eight-Hour Ozone Standard](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/rules/current/23131101_pro.pdf) (https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/rules/current/23131101_pro.pdf) opened May 6, 2025, and ends June 18, 2025. Written comments may be submitted using the [TCEQ Public Comments](https://tceq.commentinput.com/comment/search) system (<https://tceq.commentinput.com/comment/search>).

TCEQ will offer one virtual public hearing on Thursday, June 12, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. CDT to receive oral comments. TCEQ staff members will be available to discuss the proposal 30 minutes prior to the hearing from 1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. CDT. The public hearing notice is published on the [TCEQ public hearings](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/rules/hearings.html) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/rules/hearings.html>).

For more information on the FCAA Section 185 penalty fee and how to register for the public hearing please visit the [Stakeholder Group: Federal Clean Air Act Section 185 Fee](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/point-source-ei/185-fee) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/point-source-ei/185-fee>).

TCEQ Launches New Online Permit Search Portal Initiated by the Sunset Commission

As part of Sunset recommendations supported by the 88th Texas Legislature, TCEQ has developed a map-based search for the public to find regulated facilities and their permits.

Through this portal, visitors can find basic information about what TCEQ-regulated activities are going on in their area—and then drill down to find more detailed information. Search options include keywords, location area and proximity, permit status, and type of permit.

The new permit search portal can be accessed from [TCEQ's homepage](https://www.tceq.texas.gov) (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov>), along with a video that gives a quick how-to on using the portal.

TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference (ETFC) is in San Antonio, June 3-4, 2025

Agency experts will lead over 100 courses during the ETFC. TCEQ's educational tracks will cover topics ranging from air and water permitting, oil and gas, industrial and solid waste management, compliance and enforcement, remediation programs and new initiatives happening in Texas.

The Henry B. Gonzalez Exhibit Hall will showcase over 300 companies excited to share their goods and services. The TCEQ and Take Care of Texas booths will also be on the exhibitor floor.

For more information, 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>) and sign up for TCEQ's [subscription list](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXTCEQ/subscriber/new?qs=TXTC EQ_202021) (https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXTCEQ/subscriber/new?qs=TXTC EQ_202021).

Texas Environmental Excellence Awards (TEEA) and Banquet

TEEA is an annual awards program that honors achievements in environmental preservation and protection. There are ten diverse award categories that provide citizens, communities, businesses, and organizations an opportunity to obtain the state's highest environmental honor and be recognized for their environmental projects.

The TEEA Banquet will be at the Bob Bullock Museum on June 10, 2025. One of the 2025 award winners are from the HGB area: Galveston Bay Foundation, Kemah — Environmental STEM Education for the education category. By honoring these winners, the TCEQ hopes to encourage others to initiate like-minded projects and reinforce a spirit of environmental stewardship.

For more information on this event or how to apply for next year, please visit the [TEEA](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/teea/about-teea) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/teea/about-teea>).

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

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

None

ITEM 2D. Regional Air Quality Monitoring Update— (Vinny Polignano)

Vinny Polignano presented the latest air quality monitoring data, highlighting that there were two exceedance days for ozone in May 2025, down from four in April. Conroe continued to have the highest mean ozone concentrations. Additionally, he discussed PM 2.5 levels, indicating that the Houston North Loop monitor recorded the highest average PM 2.5 concentrations.

Vinny Polignano discussed the Air Quality Index (AQI) and its significance in assessing health effects from pollutants, specifically ozone and PM 2.5. He outlined the AQI categories, noting that many days are classified as moderate, which poses some risk for sensitive groups. Additionally, he indicated that ozone is becoming a more significant driving pollutant as the season progresses. He explained that the AQI is determined by the concentrations of ozone and particulate matter.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 3A. RAQPAC Officer Elections (Joel Patterson)

Chair-Grace Lewis

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM 4A.

1. Smart Commute Choices and their Impact on Air Quality- (Robyn Egbert, H-GAC)

Robyn Egbert discussed various smart commuting initiatives aimed at improving air quality. Key case studies included the implementation of telework at Oncology Partners, which reduced vehicle miles traveled by 30,000, and the use of the Connect Smart app for carpooling, which logged over 28,000 trips. Additionally, the Free Fare Friday initiative increased public transportation ridership, while the Biketober campaign promoted

biking as an alternative mode of transport. Ms. Egbert urged participants to engage with their social media channels and provided her contact information for further inquiries.

INFORMATION ITEMS

ITEM 5A.

Air Quality Summit
Cullen Auditorium -Baylor College of Medicine
September 24, 2025

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ITEM 6A.

None

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 7A.

Next meeting: July 31, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:58 A.M.