

REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, April 24, 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 Air Alliance Houston – Jennifer Hadayia 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	<u>ALTERNATE PRESENT</u> Port Houston – Kenneth Gathright Metro –Vincent Sanders Harris County Pollution Control-Stuart Mueller
<u>OTHERS PRESENT</u> Rachel Melton Emily Wagoner Shiraz Mansour Jorge Gonzalez Haris Khan Clay Pope Yue Zhang Ron Hieser	<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 – Ben Finley 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 – Rodney Sigua Houston-Galveston Area Council – Qun Zhao TCEQ – Vanessa DeArman TCEQ – Alison Stokes TCEQ – Denine Calvin EPA – Jeffrey Riley

BRIEFING

Overview

- 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 no information items and 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 held for quorum.

AGENCY REPORTS

ITEM 2A. EPA Update – (Jeff Riley)

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

Jeffrey provided an overview of the EPA's March 12th announcement detailing 31 deregulatory actions aligned with the Trump administration's initiatives. He noted that these actions affect multiple sectors, including oil and gas and mobile sources, and emphasized the need for future proposed rulemakings related to the PM 2.5 NAAQS and Clean Trucks Plan. The announcement does not negate the existing standards set by the EPA.

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.

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>).

This adopts moderate classification SIP elements that EPA deems to still be due after the reclassification to serious.

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 virtual public hearing will be held on May 29, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. To register for the hearing, please email SIPRules@tceq.texas.gov by May 22, 2025.

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>).

Executive Director's Recommended Section 185 Fee for the 2008 Ozone NAAQS

On May 1, 2025, the commission will consider proposal of the executive director's recommended changes to 30 TAC Chapter 101 to establish a TCEQ Section 185 fee program for severe or extreme 2008 eight-hour ozone NAAQS nonattainment areas that have failed to attain by the applicable attainment date.

The proposed rulemaking would include provisions for applicability requirements, cessation of the program, exemption to the program, baseline amount determination options, fee assessment, calculation, compliance schedules, collection, and payment.

For additional information, please see the [Pending Rule Proposals](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/rules/pendprop.html) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/rules/pendprop.html>).

TCEQ Comment Period for the Draft 2025 Annual Monitoring Network Plan

In accordance with federal regulations, TCEQ conducts an annual analysis of the Texas ambient air monitoring network to determine the state's compliance with federal monitoring requirements and whether monitors within the network should be added, moved, or decommissioned.

TCEQ is accepting comments on the draft *2025 Annual Monitoring Network Plan*. Copies of the draft plan can be obtained from the [TCEQ Air Monitoring Network Plans](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/monops/network_review.html) webpage (https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/monops/network_review.html). The comment period closes at midnight on May 14, 2025.

Any comments pertaining to the 2025 Annual Monitoring Network Plan should be sent to: TCEQ; P.O. Box 13087; Attention Holly Landuyt, MC-165, Austin, TX 78711-3087 or emailed to: tceqamnp@tceq.texas.gov.

Relocation/Notification Requests for Permits by Rule (PBR) and Standard Permits can now be Submitted through the State of Texas Environmental Electronic Reporting System (STEERS)

Effective May 1, 2025, all relocation and notification requests must be submitted through [STEERS](https://www3.tceq.texas.gov/steers/) (<https://www3.tceq.texas.gov/steers/>). Please note that although the PBR and standard permits may include instructions to submit relocation and notification requests to the regional office, as of September 1, 2024, all relocation and notification requests are to be submitted to the Air Permits Division (APD).

The updated APD Relocation/Notification Form can be found on the [New Source Review and Permits by Rule Notification and Verification Forms and Instructions](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/forms/newsourcereview/nsr_notice_verify_forms.html) webpage (https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/forms/newsourcereview/nsr_notice_verify_forms.html).

Updated Air Permits Electronic Modeling Evaluation Workbook (EMEW) Version 3.0

The Air Permits Division has posted EMEW v3.0. The workbooks have been updated to include several enhancements to improve accessibility, usability, and changes to be consistent with the PI-1 workbooks. These enhancements and changes increase accessibility, functionality, and provide for a more comprehensive tool for documenting modeling submittals.

As of April 2025, the workbooks are available for official use and are mandatory on July 1, 2025. It is recommended applicants begin using v3.0 to become familiar with the workbooks prior to the mandatory date. Updated video guides for EMEW v3.0 will be published to YouTube soon.

The new versions can be found on 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>) and a summary of the updates can be found on the [Updates to the Electronic Modeling Evaluation Workbooks](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/permitting/air/Modeling/guidance/emewupdate2-2020.pdf) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/permitting/air/Modeling/guidance/emewupdate2-2020.pdf>). For more information and questions, please contact ADMod@tceq.texas.gov.

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 the [subscription list](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXTCEQ/subscriber/new?qsp=TXTCSEQ_202021) (https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXTCEQ/subscriber/new?qsp=TXTCSEQ_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>).

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

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

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

Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP)

- In the current Fiscal Biennium (FY 2024-2025), TCEQ has fully implemented all of the TERP Programs, including the [Light-Duty Motor Vehicle Purchase or Lease Incentive Program \(LDPLIP\)](#), the [Alternative Fueling Facilities Program \(AFFP\)](#), the [Texas Hydrogen Infrastructure, Vehicle, and Equipment Program \(THIVE\)](#), the [Rebate Grants Program](#), the [Emissions Reduction Incentive Grants \(ERIG\)](#), the [Texas Clean School Bus Program \(TCSB\)](#), the [Seaport and Rail Yard Areas Emissions Reduction Program \(SPRY\)](#), [New Technology Implementation Grant Program \(NTIG\)](#), [Governmental Alternative Fuel Fleet Grant Program \(GAFF\)](#), the [Texas Natural Gas Vehicle Grant Program \(TNGVGP\)](#), and the [Texas Clean Fleet Program \(TCFP\)](#).

Visit 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.

Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Plan (TxVEMP) Program

Currently Accepting Applications:

- [TxVEMP All-Electric Grant Program](#) (through August 31, 2025) has approximately \$20 million remaining 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 on new program openings and other announcements, as well as program requirements, application forms, and project summary reports.

Texas Voluntary Marginal Conventional Well Plugging Program (TxMCW)

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.
- Upcoming Presentations and Seminars:
 - May 1, 2025 – Cleaner Air in Texas: An Overview of the TxMCW Program
 - Bush Convention Center, 105 N. Main St., Midland, TX, 79701 (9:30 AM – 10:30 AM)
 - June 4, 2025 – TxMCW Presentation at the TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair & Conference
 - Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, Room 217CD, 900 E. Market St., San Antonio, TX 78205 (10:30 AM – 11:30 AM)
- TxMCW program development is still underway.

Visit <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/txmcw> 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.

Visit <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/txmcw> 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)

Vinny Polignano reported on air quality monitoring, indicating four exceedance days for ozone in April and discussing trends in PM 2.5 data. He proposed incorporating historic data into future reports and creating a regional dashboard for better data visualization. Concerns were raised about TCEQ's proposal to eliminate near-road monitors in Harris County, with calls for accurate air quality representation.

ITEM 2E. Health Impacts Subcommittee– (Maggie Isied)

Maggie Isied led the Health Subcommittee update, discussing transportation conformity processes, which is a federal requirement aimed at preventing new transportation projects from worsening air quality in non-attainment areas and the need for emissions analysis, while addressing the implications for ozone and PM 2.5 non-attainment. The process involves collaboration with various stakeholders and is expected to culminate in a conformity determination by February 2026.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 3A. RAQPAC Officer Elections (Joel Patterson)

Elections held for Quorum.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM 4A.

1. Air Quality Conformity Discussion- (Maggie Isied, H-GAC)

Maggie Isied discussed that it is a federal requirement to ensure that any air quality in any non-attainment regions, such as ours, is not negatively impacted by transportation planning efforts. The goal here is new transportation projects really don't exceed or further exacerbate the air quality in our region. So, the most current standards that have been approved and are ready to go are two eight-hour ozone standards. So, we are currently in the severe designation for the 2008 ozone standard and we are in a moderate designation for the 2015 ozone standard. And what that means is that there are different activities under the different designations that regions must do to try to achieve attainment.

So, because of being in non-attainment, we are required to do a conformity analysis. And the best way I can describe it is that through the SIP that TCEQ prepares, they provide a budget of air quality emissions that we need to stay under to not further exacerbate our area and put us further in non-attainment.

2. PM 2.5 Discussion – (Vinny Polignano, H-GAC)

Vinny Polignano gave an overview on PM 2.5 Advanced Path Forward program which is to bring awareness and help improve voluntary PM reduction efforts within the location where the current PM 2.5 NAAQS

standards may be at risk. Discussion continued with H-GAC as well as RAQPAC collaborating to produce a PM 2.5 advance path forward report for 8 years. The reports framework has been altered to accommodate a SharePoint site where advance members give their feedback to help reduce PM 2.5 pollution. There will no longer be a full report.

3. 2025 Houston Regional Air Quality Summit Update- (Pharr Andrews, H-GAC)

Pharr Andrews notified the members that a date has been set for this years Symposium which will be held on September 24, 2025. The venue for this event will be at Cullen Auditorium at Baylor College of Medicine. Discussion continued that this will be a full day event that includes a light breakfast. Also, two keynote speakers will present on different topics. The lunch will be catered, and the cost is free for the conference.

INFORMATION ITEMS

ITEM 5A.

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ITEM 6A.

None

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 7A.

Next meeting: May 29, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 A.M.