

REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, August 28, 2025 – 10:00 A. M.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Virtual Teams Meeting

<u>MEMBER PRESENT</u> Harris County – Winifred Hamilton Harris County – Doug Peterson Port Houston – Trae Camble Air Alliance Houston – Jennifer Hadayia Environmental Defense Fund– Grace Lewis Houston Advanced Research Center – Ebrahim Eslami East Harris County Manufacturer Association–MaryJane Mudd City of Houston–Nguyen Ly City of Houston–Loren Hopkins TXDOT–Qing Li METRO–Vincent Sanders Waller County–Brooke Bacuetes Liberty County–Richard Brown	<u>ALTERNATE PRESENT</u> Air Alliance Houston–Inyang Uwak METRO–Kenneth McGaughey Harris County Pollution Control–Stuart Mueller
<u>OTHERS PRESENT</u> Doug Peterson Jesus Gutierrez Richard Prather Sabine Hodge	<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 – Ben Finley Houston-Galveston Area Council – Jamila Owens Houston-Galveston Area Council – Yetunde Oyewale Houston-Galveston Area Council – Marcus Tucker Houston-Galveston Area Council – Bennie Chambers Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlos Lugo Houston-Galveston Area Council – Pamela Grady Houston-Galveston Area Council – Jackie Pittman Houston-Galveston Area Council – Saara Chaudry Houston-Galveston Area Council – Rania Mohamed Houston-Galveston Area Council – Qun Zhao Houston-Galveston Area Council – Rosa Harris Houston-Galveston Area Council – Allie Isbell Houston-Galveston Area Council – Rodney Sigua Houston-Galveston Area Council – Chandler Melton Houston-Galveston Area Council – Soheil Sharifi Houston-Galveston Area Council – Wenge Fu TERP– Ron Heiser TCEQ – Emily Wagoner TCEQ – Denine Calvin

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

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

ITEM 2A. Approval of Meeting Summary (07/31/2025)

Meeting summary 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, on August 13, 2025, EPA filed a motion to the Court requesting an additional 45-day abeyance in the PM2.5 NAAQS litigation. On July 14, the DC Circuit directed EPA to include information in future motions about the progress of the PM NAAQS reconsideration, and a timetable for EPA’s decision. EPA’s August 13 motion reports that the Agency expects to sign a proposed reconsideration rule in the Fall of 2025 after review by the Office of Management and Budget and is targeting signature of any final rule by February of 2026. The Court 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.

Reconsideration of the 2009 Endangerment Finding and Greenhouse Gas Vehicle Standards

Along with the announced PM NAAQS reconsideration, reconsideration of the 2009 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Endangerment Finding and the associated GHG vehicle standards were included in Administrator Zeldin’s March 12 announcement.

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 remove 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 has been extended to September 22. ([Proposed rule](#)) / ([Extension of comment period](#)) / ([More info](#)).

EPA’s Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) Guidance

On August 12, 2025, EPA issued guidance to manufacturers of on-road diesel trucks and nonroad diesel equipment for how they may modify their DEF system software in existing vehicles and equipment to reduce engine derates. Engine derates are caused by selective catalytic reduction systems that use DEF.

Since 2010, nearly all on-road diesel trucks and many types of nonroad equipment (such as tractors and construction machinery) have used DEF as part of selective catalytic reduction systems to reduce NOx emissions. These systems can force a vehicle to drastically reduce speed or become inoperable if DEF runs out or if system sensors fail.

EPA is urging engine and equipment manufacturers to follow this guidance and develop software updates that align with the Agency’s recommendations. ([More info](#))

ITEM 2B. TCEQ Update – (Vanessa DeArman)

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

The 2026 Texas Environmental Excellence Awards (TEEA)

TCEQ is currently accepting applications for the 2026 TEEA. Awarded by the Governor's Office and TCEQ for more than 30 years, the TEEA are the highest environmental honor in the state.

For additional information and to apply in one of 10 categories such as Civic/Community, Individual, Water Conservation, Youth, and more, please visit the [TEEA website](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/teea/) (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/teea/>). Applications will be accepted through September 5, 2025.

Texas Voluntary Marginal Conventional Well Plugging (TxMCW) Program Request for Information (RFI) from Industry Stakeholders Closes Tomorrow

The TxMCW program has issued an RFI to enhance TCEQ’s understanding of the technologies, practices, pricing structures, and challenges associated with methane measurement and the plugging and abandonment of marginal conventional oil and gas wells.

Access to the full RFI document can be found at the [Smart Buy webpage](https://www.txsmartbuy.gov/esbd/582-25-00333) (<https://www.txsmartbuy.gov/esbd/582-25-00333>). Responses are due by August 29, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. CST. Additional submission requirements and guidelines can be found in the posted RFI.

For additional information and to sign up for updates, please visit the [TxMCW webpage](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/txmcw/well-plugging-grants) (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/txmcw/well-plugging-grants>). For questions, please contact TxMCW at 512-239-4950 or at TxMCW@tceq.texas.gov.

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

On September 24, 2025, the commission is set to adopt revisions to 30 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 114, Control of Air Pollution from Motor Vehicles, and to the Texas I/M SIP to implement two bills passed during the 88th Texas Legislature, 2023, Regular Session: House Bill 3297 eliminated the mandatory annual vehicle safety inspection program for noncommercial vehicles, effective January 1, 2025; and Senate Bill 2102 extends the initial registration and inspection period for rental vehicles to three years.

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>).

TCEQ Air Monitoring Network Change Announcement Update

TCEQ reviews ambient air quality monitoring network annually and creates an annual monitoring network plan (AMNP) to demonstrate how Texas is meeting or will meet federal air monitoring requirements specified in 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 58 and its appendices. In addition to monitoring described in the AMNP, TCEQ and its monitoring partners (city, county, private, and industry) operate a robust network of non-federal, state-initiative monitors that support a variety of purposes, including potential health effects evaluation. Data from these additional, state-initiative monitors are publicly available on TCEQ’s [Texas Air Monitoring Information System \(TAMIS\)](https://www17.tceq.texas.gov/tamis/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.welcome) webpage (<https://www17.tceq.texas.gov/tamis/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.welcome>).

On August 1, 2025, TCEQ released the annual summary of changes to TCEQ-owned, state-initiative air quality monitors and/or sites not discussed in the AMNP.

1. Changes for the Houston area include the deactivation and removal of a noncontinuous VOC canister sampler from the Houston Bayland Park monitoring site due to low monitoring measurements and the lack of emission sources in the vicinity site. The canister has since been reallocated to the Houston East monitoring site due to its proximity to schools and neighboring industrial activities.

Any questions pertaining to the 2025 AMNP should be emailed to: tceqamnp@tceq.texas.gov. Any questions pertaining to monitors and/or monitoring sites, should be emailed to: monops@tceq.texas.gov.

Proposed Revisions to 30 TAC Chapter 17 Tax Relief for Property Used for Environmental Protection

- On August 20, 2025, the commission approved proposal of revisions to 30 TAC Chapters 17 and 18 (Project No. 2023-123-017-AI).
- The public comment period opens on September 5, 2025, and closes on October 6, 2025. A virtual public hearing has been scheduled for the proposed rulemakings on September 29, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The hearing will be conducted in English, and instructions for participating in the hearing will also be provided in Spanish.
- For more information, please visit the [Tax Relief for Pollution Control Property Program Hot Topics](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/taxrelief/prop2_hottopics.html) webpage (https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/taxrelief/prop2_hottopics.html).

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

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

Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Plan (TxVEMP) Program

Deadline Officially Extended. Currently Accepting Applications through August 31, 2026:

- [TxVEMP All-Electric Grant Program](#) 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 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.
- TxMCW program development is still underway.

A [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) is currently posted to solicit feedback to enhance our understanding of the technologies, practices, pricing structures and challenges associated with methane measurement and the plugging and abandonment of marginal conventional oil and gas wells.

Access to the full RFI document can be found on the [Smart Buy webpage](#). Responses are due by Aug. 29, 2025, at 2 p.m. CST. Additional submission requirements and guidelines may be found in the posted RFI.

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– (Andrew DeCandis)

Andrew DeCandis addressed the current issues with air now affecting air quality data access and introduced a beta version of an air quality resource hub being developed at HGAC, which will provide users with historical data and health recommendations. DeCandis also presented a multi-phase plan for air quality data analysis, focusing initially on criteria pollutants while considering hazardous pollutants for future phases. DeCandis acknowledged the need for stakeholder feedback and mentioned ongoing funding for a study on microplastics. He provided updates on a new platform for air quality program requirements, set to launch in early 2026, and confirmed that stakeholder comments regarding the Rider 7 project would be facilitated in future meetings.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM 4A.

A. Air Alliance Dashboard Overview - (Dr. InYang Uwak, Air Alliance Research and Policy Director)

Inyang Uwak from Air Alliance Houston presented the Community Air Monitoring Dashboard, which tracks real-time air quality data and alerts for various pollutants. While the dashboard provides current conditions, it lacks historical data analysis capabilities. Uwak clarified that data sharing requires formal agreements to protect community data. The discussion also included suggestions for incorporating international air quality metrics and potential collaboration opportunities related to the FIFA World Cup air quality project, encouraging the committee to brainstorm ideas for sustainability initiatives during the event.

B. FIFA World Cup Air Quality Project Opportunities - (Chair Grace Lewis, EDF)

The RAQPAC members discussed the Houston FIFA 2026 community air quality and green mobility legacy project that is ready to launch initiatives designed to leverage the world cup to deliver lasting health, environmental, and transportation benefits to Houston communities. The project will fund local nonprofits such as Air Alliance Houston and EDF to expand permanent air quality monitoring, particularly in underserved neighborhoods, without removing existing monitors from vulnerable areas. Monitors will also be installed at stadiums and key venues to assess both events related and long-term impacts. Discussion continued that real time data will be shared through a public dashboard and digital AQI displays around city and at FIFA sites, featuring multilingual health tips and behavioral nudges to reduce exposure and emissions. The initiative also includes green mobility efforts such as expanding bike share, e-scooter access, and micro transit connections near venues, as well as launching a bike to the game challenge with incentives and real time impact tracking. Free or discounted METRO rides for ticket holders and partnership with rideshare companies to prioritize EVs and pooled rides will further reduce transportation related emissions. With cross sector partnerships, a prepared budget, and broad community support, this project is positioned to create a legacy of cleaner air, more equitable infrastructure, and greater public engagement in environment health well beyond the world cup.

INFORMATION ITEMS

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

- CPRG public meeting -Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program -for a list of available dates and times for the upcoming meeting visit the website at -H-gac.com/CPRG.
- 2025 Houston Regional Air Quality Summit first annual event Wednesday, September 24, 2025
The Cullen Building at Baylor College of Medicine,
1Baylor Plaza, Houston, Tx. 77030
9:00am-4:00pm
- Clean Air, Healthy Communities website- to ask people to share their thoughts on what you would like to see happen in your region by taking a survey on the website at- <https://engage.h-gac.com/clean-air>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ITEM 6A.

None

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 7A.

Next meeting: September 25, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:31 A.M.