

REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, April 25, 2024 – 10:00 A. M.
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Virtual Teams Meeting

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| <u>MEMBER PRESENT</u> Fort Bend County – Joel Patterson Baylor College Medicine – Winifred Hamilton American Lung Association – Charlie Gagen Harris County Pollution Control – Latrice Babin Environmental Defense Fund– Grace Lewis City of Houston– Win Colbert Harris County Precinct 2 – Kristen Lee Houston METRO–Edmund Petry | <u>ALTERNATE PRESENT</u> Houston Advanced Research Center – Ebrahim Eslami Port Houston –Kenneth Gathright Associated General Contractors of America –Marc Anderson Harris County Pollution Control–Stuart Mueller Houston METRO–Vincent Sanders Air Alliance Houston–Inyang Uwak |
| <u>OTHERS PRESENT</u> Harris County, Texas – Shannay Baradaren | <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 – Sydni Ligons Houston-Galveston Area Council – Vincent Polignano Houston-Galveston Area Council – Susan Jaworski Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlos Lugo Houston-Galveston Area Council – Craig Raborn Houston-Galveston Area Council – Lucinda Martinez Houston-Galveston Area Council – Ben Finley Houston-Galveston Area Council – Gloria Brown Houston-Galveston Area Council – Rodney Sigua TCEQ – Vanessa DeArman EPA – Jeffrey Riley TCEQ – Denine Calvin TCEQ – Alison Stokes |

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 no 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

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

ITEM 1B. Approval of Meeting Summary (03-28-2024)

Meeting summary held for quorum.

AGENCY REPORTS

Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee
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ITEM 2A. EPA Update – (Jeff Riley)

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

Final Rule: Light & Medium-Duty Vehicles Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards, Model Years 2027 & Later

On March 20, EPA announced the final rule, Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles, that sets new, more protective standards to build on the existing federal GHG and the 2014 Tier 3 standards for these vehicles. The vehicles covered by this rule are passenger cars & light trucks, as well as larger pickups & vans (medium-duty, also known as Class 2b and 3 vehicles). These new standards for GHGs, as well as “Tier 4” criteria pollutant emissions standards for non-methane organic gases (NMOG), NOx, PM, and other criteria pollutants & precursors will significantly reduce air pollutant emissions starting with model year (MY) 2027, and fully phase-in over a 6-year period between MY 2027 through MY 2032. The final rule published in the Federal Register April 18, and becomes effective June 17. The rule is available on EPA’s dedicated webpage for Regulations for Emissions from Vehicles and Engines, as well as a supporting [fact sheet](#), [regulatory impact analysis](#) (contains discussion of associated costs), [response to comments document](#) (also contains cost discussions), [Air Quality Analysis memo to the docket](#), and [EPA’s OMEGA model runs & files supporting the final rule’s benefit-cost & effects analysis](#). For more information, see: <https://www.epa.gov/regulations-emissions-vehicles-and-engines/final-rule-multi-pollutant-emissions-standards-model>

Nonregulatory Public Docket: Reducing GHG Emissions from Existing Gas Turbines at Power Plants

On March 26, EPA Administrator Michael Regan announced a new, comprehensive approach to reduce GHG emissions from the entire fleet of natural gas-fired turbines, as well as to set protective standards for toxic and criteria air pollution as part of EPA’s strategy to pursue a suite of rulemakings to address GHG emissions, air toxics, and emissions of nitrogen oxides from the power sector. EPA has opened a non-regulatory docket and issued framing questions to gather stakeholder input on how we can design a stronger, more durable approach to GHG regulation of the entire fleet of existing gas combustion turbines in the power sector under CAA Section 111(d). EPA is committed to expeditiously proposing this and the other elements of a comprehensive approach to regulation of climate, toxic and air pollution from combustion turbines. Engagement over the next several months will be essential to shaping new proposals that protect communities, public health, and the environment. EPA is pursuing a robust stakeholder engagement process, consulting with energy workers, communities with environmental justice concerns, environmental justice leaders, industry, grid operators, and all interested parties to help develop these proposals. The docket opened March 26, 60-day public comment period closes May 28 ([EPA Administrator’s February 29 statement](#)) / ([Nonregulatory docket](#)) / ([more info](#))

Final Rule: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards for Heavy-Duty Vehicles, Phase 3

On March 29, EPA announced this final rule, “Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards for Heavy-Duty Vehicles – Phase 3,” that sets stronger standards to reduce GHG emissions from heavy-duty (HD) vehicles beginning in model year (MY) 2027. The new standards will be applicable to HD vocational vehicles (such as delivery trucks, refuse haulers, public utility trucks, transit, shuttle, school buses, etc.) and tractors (such as day cabs and sleeper cabs on tractor-trailer trucks). These final “Phase 3” standards build on EPA’s Heavy-Duty Phase 2 program from 2016 and maintain that program’s flexible structure, to recognize the diverse nature of the heavy-duty vehicle industry. The standards are technology-neutral and performance-based, allowing each manufacturer to choose what set of emissions control technologies is best suited for them and the needs of their customers. ([Pre-publication final rule](#)) / ([Fact sheet](#)) / ([more info](#))

Final Rule to Strengthen Standards for Synthetic Organic Chemical Plants and Polymers and Resins Plants

On April 9, EPA announced a set of final rules that will significantly reduce emissions of toxic air pollution from chemical plants, including the potent air toxics ethylene oxide (EtO) and chloroprene from covered sources by 80%. Total air toxics emissions reductions from this rule are projected at over 6,200 tpy. The reductions dramatically reduce the number of people with elevated air toxics-related cancer risks in communities surrounding the plants that use those two chemicals, especially communities historically overburdened by air toxics pollution. EPA’s info page includes the resources included on the agenda, as well as an overview presentation, regulatory impact analysis, and list of facilities

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covered by the NESHAP for synthetic organic chemical plants & Group I & Group II polymers & resins plants. ([Pre-publication final rule](#)) / ([Fact sheet](#)) / ([more info](https://assessments.epa.gov/isa/document/&deid=359536))

Final Rule: Greenhouse Gas Standards and Guidelines for Fossil Fuel-Fired Power Plants

On April 25, EPA issued final carbon pollution standards for power plants that set CO₂ limits for new gas-fired combustion turbines and CO₂ emission guidelines for existing coal, oil and gas-fired steam generating units, securing important climate benefits and protecting public health. These rules will significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from existing coal-fired power plants and from new natural gas turbines, ensuring that all long-term coal-fired plants and base load new gas-fired plants control 90% of their carbon pollution. Existing coal-fired power plants are the largest source of GHGs from the power sector. New natural gas-fired combustion turbines are some of the largest new sources of GHG being built today and these final standards will ensure that they are constructed to minimize their GHG emissions. EPA has evaluated the emissions reductions, benefits, and costs of the final carbon pollution standards in a Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA). The RIA projects reductions of 1.38 billion metric tons of CO₂ systemwide through 2047 along with tens of thousands of tons of PM_{2.5}, SO₂, and NO_x – harmful air pollutants that are known to endanger public health. ([Pre-publication final rule](#)) / ([Fact sheet](#)) / ([more info](#))

ITEM 2B. TCEQ Update – (Vanessa DeArman)

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

Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (HGB) 2008 Eight-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) Attainment Demonstration and Reasonable Further Progress State Implementation Plan (SIP) Revisions, and Associated Rules

On April 24, 2024, the commission adopted the executive director’s recommended HGB severe area attainment demonstration (AD) and reasonable further progress SIP revisions and rulemakings to 30 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 115 and Chapter 117.

The HGB 2008 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>).

SIP Emissions Year Change for HGB and Current Emissions Year Application Deadline

The emissions years for the HGB 2008 eight-hour ozone NAAQS severe AD SIP revision for credit generation will change upon submission to EPA. The Emissions Banking and Trading (EBT) rules in 30 TAC Chapter 101, Subchapter H, Division 1 and 4 require sources in nonattainment areas to have emissions in the specified SIP emissions year to generate emission reduction credits (ERC) or discrete emission reduction credits (DERC). Changes in the SIP emissions year may impact the amount of credits sources are eligible to generate.

HGB 2008 Eight-Hour Ozone Nonattainment Areas

- EGUs
 - Current SIP Emissions Year: 2018
 - New SIP Emissions Year: 2019
- All other point sources
 - Current SIP Emissions Year: 2016
 - New SIP Emissions Year: 2019
- Oil and gas area sources
 - Current SIP Emissions Year: 2017
 - New SIP Emissions Year: 2019
- All other area sources
 - Current SIP Emissions Year: 2017
 - New SIP Emissions Year: 2020
- Mobile sources
 - Current SIP Emissions Year: 2017
 - New SIP Emissions Year: 2019

Applications to generate ERCs or DERCs under the Current SIP Emissions Years should be submitted by May 6, 2024. The TCEQ anticipates that the AD SIP revisions will be submitted on May 7, 2024; however, this date is subject to change. An updated notification will be sent to EBT email subscribers if there are any changes.

For additional information and guidance, please visit the [ERC](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/banking/erc_program.html) webpage (https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/banking/erc_program.html) or [DERC](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/banking/derc_program.html) webpage (https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/banking/derc_program.html). If you have questions, please email: ebt@tceq.texas.gov.

Revised Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) NAAQS

On February 7, 2024, EPA finalized its revision of the annual PM_{2.5} NAAQS to 9.0 µg/m³ and published in the *Federal Register* on March 6, 2024.

- Final NAAQS revision promulgated: February 7, 2024
- Effective date: May 6, 2024
- State designations due to EPA: February 7, 2025
- 120-day letter from EPA to Governor: Early October 2025
- Anticipated final designations: February 6, 2026
- Attainment date: December 2032

TCEQ plans to hold informational meetings at the end of June and will hold an informal public comment period on the state designations considered by the commission before being sent to the Governor for his consideration for submittal to EPA.

2024 Annual Monitoring Network Plan

TCEQ is currently accepting comments on the [TCEQ 2024 Annual Monitoring Network Plan](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/monops/network_review.html) (https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/monops/network_review.html) until 5:00 p.m. on May 16, 2024.

In accordance with federal regulations, the 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. This document presents the current Texas air monitoring network, along with all finalized and proposed changes to the network from July 1, 2023, through December 31, 2025. Any comments pertaining to the 2024 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.

Environmental Trade Fair and Conference (ETFC)

The ETFC will be held May 14-15, 2024, at the Austin Convention Center. During the two-day Conference, 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 registration is open through May 12. Exhibitor booths are sold out. 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>).

Toxicology News: The Carbon Tetrachloride Development Support Document (DSD) is Final

On April 8, 2024, the Carbon Tetrachloride DSD is now final. For more information, please visit the [Toxicology Final Development Support Documents](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/toxicology/dsd/final) webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/toxicology/dsd/final>).

TCEQ Announces 2024 Texas Environmental Excellence Award (TEEA) Winners

Since 1993, the TEEA program is an annual awards program that recognizes environmental preservation and protection achievements and has honored more than 250 successful environmental projects and activities. These awards help inspire others to take steps to become better environmental stewards in their communities.

The selected winners have implemented innovative projects geared toward environmental sustainability, preventing pollution, and protecting Texas. TCEQ will recognize this year's winners and finalists at the annual awards banquet in Austin on May 15. TCEQ would like to congratulate this year's winners and finalists, the full list can be found at www.TEEA.org.

- Civic/Community: Keep San Angelo Beautiful, San Angelo — Tires-To-Go
- Education: Keep Irving Beautiful Irving — KIB Environmental Education
- **Environmental Educator of the Year: Venessa Wallace, Peet Junior High, Conroe - Wildlife Management Teacher**
- Innovative Operations/Management: Parkland Health, Dallas — Holistic Energy Management Framework
- **Individual: Don and Penny Johnson, Missouri City — Lifetime Environmental Education Efforts**
- **Pollution Prevention: Port of Houston, Houston — Port of Houston’s Carbon Neutrality, Electrification, and Sustainability Work**
- Technical/Technology: Trinity River Authority of Texas – Information Technology, Arlington — Digital Twin
- Water Conservation: Tarrant Regional Water District, Fort Worth — Learn and Grow Program
- Youth: Ella Elkins, San Angelo — Plastic Recycling Project

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

TERP staff gave an update to the members on the latest information:
Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP)

Last month, TCEQ suspended acceptance of applications for the [Light-Duty Motor Vehicle Purchase or Lease Incentive Program \(LDPLIP\)](#), the [Alternative Fueling Facilities Program \(AFFP\)](#), and the new [Texas Hydrogen Infrastructure, Vehicle, and Equipment Program \(THIVE\)](#), with sufficient demand to award all available funding under each of the grant programs, with the exception of the LDPLIP, under which all 2,000 available electric vehicle rebates will be awarded, but grants for natural gas vehicles remained unused due to low demand.

TCEQ is currently accepting applications under the [Texas Clean School Bus Program \(TCSB\)](#) until the earlier of October 14, 2024, or all available funds have been requested, with up to \$20 million available on a first-come, first-served basis to upgrade or replace older diesel school buses with new models. As of April 25, 2024, applicants may now submit more than one application for new buses, with a limit of five buses per application.

Coming Soon:

TCEQ plans to open the Diesel Emissions Reduction Incentives (DERI) listed below in May of this year, with an estimated \$150 million in grants available across the two programs:

- [Emissions Reduction Incentive Grants \(ERIG\)](#) will offer grants to repower or replace older locomotives, marine vessels, stationary equipment, or select non-road equipment to reduce NOx emissions in ozone nonattainment areas and affected counties in Texas (competitive selection).
- [Rebate Grants Program](#) will offer grants in eligible counties to upgrade or replace diesel heavy-duty vehicles and non-road equipment on a first-come, first-served basis (first-come, first-served selection).

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 Open: [TxVEMP All-Electric Grant Program](#) with over \$50 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.

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

Andrew notified the committee members that all these charts can be found on the “RAQPAC Meeting Agendas and Materials” website under the heading for today’s meeting. Since our last meeting in March, there have been no exceedances of either the 2008 75 ppb ground-level ozone and four exceedances of the 2015 70 ppb standard.

So far, in 2024 the region’s maximum 4th highest value was 70 ppb as measured at the Conroe Relocated monitor. Followed by 62 at the Galveston 99th street monitor. Also, the YTD regional design value for the 2022 through 2024 period was 76 ppb as measured at the Houston Bayland Park monitor. That means we’ve now exceeded both of our existing ozone standards for the year. Finally, here is our day-by-day design value chart, showing the current design value compared to the same time over the last 20 years. There are a couple of stylistic changes this month that I’ve made. You can see the 2004 2023 in green, and the current design value for the 2022 through 2024 period in red.

Moving on to the monitoring of PM 2.5 values. You can see the annual PM2.5 concentrations for all of the region’s regulatory particulate monitors since 2001, as well as the monthly average PM2.5 concentrations over the last year. The current NAC standard is in solid black, and the dashed line represents the new 9 micrograms per cubic meter standard.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 3A.

None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM 4A. American Lung Association State of the Air Report 2023 – (Charlie Gagen, *American Lung Association*)

Charlie Gagen presented the key findings of the American Lung Association’s State of the Air Report, highlighting the increase in unhealthy levels of air pollution across the United States. He emphasized the impact of particle pollution and ozone on public health and the disparities in air quality based on location and demographics. Charlie also discussed the updated EPA standards for particle pollution and the need for more air quality monitors in counties without them. He advocated for stronger ozone limits to better protect public health and encouraged individuals to take actions such as checking air pollution forecasts and improving indoor air quality.

ITEM 4B. Health Committee Steering Committee Update – (*Grace Lewis, EDF and Charlie Gagen, ALA*)

The meeting concluded with Grace Lewis recapping the previous steering committee meeting and encouraging participation in the upcoming meeting. Shannay Baradaren from IGA expressed interest in academic involvement and sought ways for UH to contribute to the committee, to which Grace welcomed their participation and expressed interest in their research.

INFORMATION ITEMS

ITEM 5A.

Andrew DeCandis discussed a survey request from SPEER for small cities and offered to facilitate participation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ITEM 6A.

None

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 7A.

Next meeting: May 30, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:57 A.M.