

# REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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## MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, July 28, 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  
Harris County, Precinct 2 – Kristen Lee  
Port of Houston Authority – Trae Camble  
Environmental Defense Fund – Grace Lewis  
American Lung Association – Charlie Gagen  
Regional Interest – Gary Scoggin  
METRO – Edmund Petry

### **ALTERNATE PRESENT**

Air Alliance Houston – Harrison Humphrey  
Harris County Pollution Control – Stuart Mueller  
TxDOT – Charles Airiohudion  
City of Houston – Darryl Tate  
Liberty County – David Douglas  
Houston Advanced Research Center – Ebrahim Eslami  
League of Women Voters – Katie Campbell  
City of Houston – Nguyen Ly

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Environmental Defense Fund – Hayley Leonard  
Environmental Defense Fund – Maia Draper  
Harris County – Jolie Villegas  
Harris County – Lisa Lin  
METRO – Kenneth McGaughey  
Environmental Defense Fund – Stephanie Coates  
Air Alliance – Melissa Beeler  
Gary Harrison

### **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 – Gilbert Washington  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Jamila Owen  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Daniel Brassil  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Diane Domagas  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carrie Evans  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlos Lugo  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Fizza Hassan  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Kim Neely  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Adam Beckom  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Brandy George  
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Veronica Waller  
Environmental Protection Agency – Jeff Riley  
TCEQ – Vanessa De Arman  
TCEQ – Nate Hickman

### **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**

Win Colbert called the meeting to order, and members were introduced.

## **ITEM 1B. Approval of Meeting Summary (6-30-2022)**

Meeting summary approved.

## **AGENCY REPORTS**

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

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

#### **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 on target to propose its decision on review of the PM NAAQS by Summer 2022 and issue a final decision by 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**

A virtual public meeting was originally scheduled on 6/8, 6/10, 6/13, and 6/17/22 for the CASAC Ozone Panel to peer review the agency's Draft PA for the reconsideration. On May 13, 2022, the CASAC Ozone Panel elected to pause the review of the Draft PA, and used the scheduled meetings on 6/8 & 6/10 for the panel to decide if they wanted to further discuss the science prior to reviewing the Draft PA. The meetings scheduled for 6/13 and 6/17 were cancelled.

From the June 8 & 10 meetings, the CASAC Ozone Review Panel has agreed that a fuller discussion on the science is needed before moving forward on reconsideration of this NAAQS.

July 12, 2022 Update: The EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) Staff Office announces two public meetings of the CASAC Ozone Review Panel. A public meeting will be held for the CASAC Ozone Review Panel to receive a briefing from EPA on the 2020 Ozone Integrated Science Assessment (ISA) and to hear public comments. A second public meeting will be held for the panel to discuss scientific issues related to the 2020 Ozone ISA.

The public meeting for the panel to receive the briefing from EPA and public comments will be held on August 29, 2022, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The public meeting for the panel to discuss scientific issues related to the 2020 Ozone ISA will be held on Monday, September 12, 2022, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Wednesday, September 14, 2022, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and Friday, September 16, 2022, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All times listed are in Eastern Time.

Please refer to the CASAC website at <https://casac.epa.gov> for details on how to access the meetings.

For more information regarding these meetings, please refer to the July 12, 2022 Federal Register announcement: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-07-12/pdf/2022-14812.pdf>

#### **Ozone Determinations of Attainment:**

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On April 13, 2022, EPA proposed determinations as to whether nonattainment areas under the 2008 and 2015 8-hour ozone NAAQS had attained those standards by the attainment date.

The areas addressed in the 2008 ozone NAAQS proposal are currently classified as “Serious” nonattainment and were required to attain the standards by July 20, 2021. EPA based these determinations on the most recent publicly available and certified ozone monitoring data, from the years 2018-2020. The published Federal Register (FR) proposal is here: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-04-13/pdf/2022-07509.pdf> and a summary fact sheet is available here: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-level-ozone-pollution/2008-ozone-national-ambient-air-quality-standards-naaqs-nonattainment>.

Summary of 2008 ozone NAAQS proposal:

- Deny 1-year extension for Houston attainment date
- Find Houston did not attain by attainment date, reclassify to Severe, SIP revisions due to EPA no later than 18 months after effective date of reclassification to Severe

The areas addressed in the 2015 ozone NAAQS proposal are currently classified as “Marginal” nonattainment and were required to attain the standards by August 3, 2021. EPA based these determinations on the most recent publicly available and certified ozone monitoring data, from the years 2018-2020. The published FR proposal is here: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-04-13/pdf/2022-07513.pdf> and a summary fact sheet is available here: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-level-ozone-pollution/proposed-determinations-attainment-attainment-date-extensions-0>.

Summary of 2015 ozone NAAQS proposal:

- Find Houston did not attain by attainment date, reclassify to Moderate, SIP revisions due to EPA no later than January 1, 2023

The comment period for each proposal closed on June 13, 2022. EPA received relevant adverse comments on each proposed action & is currently working to respond to comments and take final action.

**EPA Clean School Bus Program: 2022 Clean School Bus Rebates**

\$500 million is now available for 2022 Clean School Bus Rebates, EPA is conducting webinars in advance of the August 19, 2022 application deadline:

- July 27 @ 1PM ET – How to Apply with Live Q&A
- August 10 @ 1PM ET – U.S. Department of Agriculture: Rural Electric Cooperatives Infrastructure Funding

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

**TCEQ staff notified members on the latest information:**

State Implementation Plan (SIP) Update

The **TCEQ Houston-Galveston-Brazoria Air Quality Technical Information Meeting** (HGB AQ TIM) will be held virtually on **July 28 from 1:00-5:00 pm**. The purpose of the meeting is to inform stakeholders of air quality modeling and other technical information relevant to the HGB ozone nonattainment area. TCEQ staff will give technical presentations and updates about SIP requirements, air quality modeling, and other related topics. Additional updates and technical presentations may also be provided by other stakeholders. Information is available on TCEQ’s SIP Hot Topics webpage: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/sip/Hottop.html>. The meeting agenda and details on how to participate are provided on the HGB AQ TIM page at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/airmod/meetings/aqtim-hgb.html>. Details on how to sign up for meeting notifications are also available at the webpage.

North Wayside PM<sub>2.5</sub> Monitor Update

TCEQ is working to acquire speciated PM data for the monitor to better understand the source of the high values.

The speciated sampling at the North Wayside monitor began the first week of July (2022), but results are not available yet. Desert Research Institute (DRI) is the lab that will analyze the samples and provide the speciation data for TCEQ. The usual practice is for DRI to analyze about three months of samples at a time. They are currently planning to collect a years' worth of samples for speciation analysis. We will continue to provide updates as this matter develops.

#### 2023 Texas Environmental Excellence Awards (TEEA)

The TCEQ is now accepting applications for the 2023 Texas Environmental Excellence Awards. The TEEA is an annual awards program that honors achievements in environmental preservation and protection. The categories for nomination include Agriculture, Civic/Community, Education, Environmental Educator of the Year, Individual, Innovative Operations/Management, Pollution Prevention, Technical/Technology, Water Conservation, and Youth. Instructions for how to apply, or nominate, are available at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/teea>.

#### Online Stakeholder Meeting – TCEQ Disability Non-Discrimination, Public Participation, and Language Access Plans

The TCEQ will hold an online stakeholder meeting on August 2, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. to solicit input from all stakeholders on implementation of the recently finalized Disability Non-Discrimination Plan, Public Participation Plan, and Language Access Plan. Simultaneous professional language interpretation in Spanish will be provided during the meeting.

For more info about this event visit <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/agency/decisions/participation/2022-08-02-notice-for-ira-plans-meeting-combined-notice.pdf> and/or contact Amy Browning at [amy.browning@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:amy.browning@tceq.texas.gov) of TCEQ's Environmental Law Division.

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

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

#### **Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP)**

- The Alternative Fueling Facilities Program (AFFP) closed on July 12, 2022, with \$12 million available to construct or reconstruct fueling facilities that provide natural gas, electric charging and other alternative fuels within the [Clean Transportation Zone](#). The program received more than \$40 million in requested grant funds and TCEQ is currently reviewing and scoring applications, with award announcements expected in the coming month.
- The TCEQ has suspended acceptance of light-duty zero emission vehicle (ZEV) rebates due to over-subscription of available rebates (only 2,000 vehicle rebates for ZEVs are available). The program is still accepting for applications the purchase or lease of an eligible new light-duty motor vehicle powered by compressed natural gas (CNG) or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), on a first-come, first-served basis until 5:00 p.m. central standard time on January 7, 2023, or until all available funds have been awarded.
- The Seaport and Rail Yard Areas Emissions Reduction (SPRY) Program is still accepting applications on a first-come, first-served basis until 5:00 p.m. central standard time on November 22, 2022. The SPRY program provides financial incentives for the replacement of older drayage and cargo handling equipment operating at qualifying seaports, facilities, and rail yards in areas of Texas designated as nonattainment areas under the federal Clean Air Act.
- The Texas Clean School Bus (TCSB) Program is accepting applications on a first-come, first-served basis until 5:00p.m. on October 20, 2022, or until all available funding is awarded. The TCSB program provides grants to replace or retrofit school buses to help reduce children's exposure to diesel exhaust in and around diesel-fueled school buses.

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).

Up Next:

Texas Natural Gas Vehicle Grants Program – Summer 2022

Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee

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- Emissions Reduction Incentive Grants (ERIG) – Fall 2022
- **Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Plan (TxVEMP) Program**  
Visit [www.txvwfund.org](http://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. Contact TxVEMP staff by phone at (833) 215-TXVW (8989) or by email at [VWsettle@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:VWsettle@tceq.texas.gov).

For more information visit our website [www.terpgrants.org](http://www.terpgrants.org).

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

Since our last meeting in June, there have been zero exceedances of the 2008 75 ppb ground-level ozone standard or of the 2015 70 ppb standard.

So far, this year, the region's maximum 4th highest value remains at 77 ppb located at the Houston Harvard Street monitor. Moving on, the current regional design value for the 2020 through 2022 period has risen to 73 ppb as measured at the Houston Bayland Park monitor. Compared to previous years, the current design value continues to run lower than what we have seen at this time.

Moving on to PM, you can see our current annual average for all of our regional regulatory monitors for this year and going back to 2001. We also have the most recent 12 months of PM2.5 concentrations for these stations within the region. Note the significant increase in monthly average PM2.5 concentrations during the last month decreased to expectant levels. July has the influence of June's dust storm. All the charts can be found on the RAQPAC meeting materials website under today's meeting.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

##### **ITEM 3A. RAQPAC Officer Elections** (Win Colbert)

**Chair: Grace Lewis**

**Vice-Chair: Vacant – To be revisited at a future meeting**

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **ITEM 4A. Decision Support Framework for Integration of Environmental Justice & Health Impacts into the Transportation Improvement Program** (Fizza Hassan, H-GAC)

Fizza Hassan gave an overview to the members on how to support decision framework for integration of environmental justice and health impacts in Transportation for improvement projects for the upcoming years at H-GAC. Discussion continued that they agreed upon a work plan to help lay the foundation to incorporate our goals on environmental justice, equity, and health impacts into H-GAC's transportation planning activities as well as agency transportation project selection process.

It was further discussed that the first stage incorporated a comprehensive overview of the use and implementation of environmental justice, and health effects in local and regional project planning activities. Environmental Justice is not a general issue. It's specific, it's common to a community, it's unique in its nature. All the problem solution can't be applied every where else. It was pointed out that H-GAC would like to lead the effort as an MPO to contribute towards sustainability to our urban cities.

It was mentioned that we also want to add to urban community development efforts. Another important factor is improving public engagement among people and stake holders. The goal of this project is to identify a clear intention to the stakeholders. In order to this, we research and prioritize things that may be pertinent at this point. Working to integrate that into the existing framework.

Lastly, we want to overlook where our past projects have been, and how they contribute to our future work and improvements, while identifying the loopholes.

In closing, some recommendations were given to be more specific when it come to our goals. Create dialogue with public and private partners. Have a dedicated in-house staff to further activities with environmental planning.

**ITEM 4B. Developing Harris County’s Climate Justice Action Plan (Jolie Villegas, Harris County)**

Jolie Villegas gave an overview on Climate Action Plan. Discussion continued with phase one, which is the internal action piece centered around inventory and reducing greenhouse gas emission within county operations. It also involves efforts to increase resiliency of county assets as well as institutionalize sustainability initiatives across departments and improve internal carbon accounting practices.

In further discussion, phase two, will help to prioritize community opinions in the planning and decision-making process. As well as build social cohesion for vulnerable communities and engage with partners organizations and other community-based organizations. The phase works best after the completion of phase one. Currently, we are still developing the inventory and establishing goals and strategies.

In closing, the next steps will be to engage in community partnerships and events to build relationships.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

- Staff discussed currently working on performance measures for the next 4 years for federally funded air quality improvement projects. We will be presenting a draft for transportation air quality subcommittee Tuesday, August 2. Please let me know if you have any interest in participating.
- Gulf Coast Clean School Bus Funding/School Bus Electrification  
Thursday, August 4, 2022 at 9:30A.M.  
Hosted by H-GAC

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ITEM 6A.**

- PM 2.5 Advance Subcommittee Meeting  
Thursday, August 18, 2022 at 1:00 P.M.
- Evolve Houston: Free Event  
George R. Brown Convention Center  
Thursday, August 18, 2022  
Evolve Houston.org

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ITEM 7A.**

Next meeting: August 25, 2022

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 A.M.