

REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, July 27, 2023 – 10:00 A. M.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Virtual Teams Meeting

MEMBER PRESENT

City of Houston – Win Colbert
Harris County Pollution Control – Latrice Babin
Fort Bend County – Joel Patterson
Waller County – Brooke Bacuetes
Port Houston – Trae Camble
Harris County Precinct 2 – Kristen Lee
Environmental Defense Fund – Grace Lewis
DOW – Sherman Hampton
Baylor College Medicine – Winifred Hamilton
American Lung Association – Charlie Gagen

ALTERNATE PRESENT

TxDOT – Charles Airiohuodion
City of Houston – Darryl Tate
Air Alliance Houston – Harrison Humphreys
Harris County Pollution Control – Stuart Mueller
Houston Advanced Research Center – Ebrahim Eslami
League of Women Voters – Katie Campbell

OTHERS PRESENT

Rice University – Kathy Ensor
Rice University – Laura A. Campos
Houston TX – Sharmila Bhandari
Houston TX – Anthony Mulenga
Harris County Precinct 2 – Miguel Medina
Harris County Precinct 2 – Kinza Siddiqui

STAFF PRESENT

Houston-Galveston Area Council – Andrew DeCandis
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carrie Evans
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Caroline Bailey
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Sydni Ligons
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Ben Finley
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Lucinda Martinez
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Francis Rodriguez
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Ayo Jibowu
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Pharr Andrews
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlos Lugo
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Veronica Waller
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Anita Hollmann
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Qun Zhao
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Craig Raborn
TCEQ – Vanessa DeArman
EPA – Jeffrey Riley
TCEQ/TERP – 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 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

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

ITEM 1B. Approval of Meeting Summaries (6-29-2023)

Meeting summary approved.

Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee

July 27, 2023,

AGENCY REPORTS

ITEM 2A. EPA Update (Jeff Riley)

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

Proposed Updates of the Air Emissions Reporting Rule

On August 9, 2023, EPA [proposed updates to the Air Emissions Reporting Requirements \(AERR\)](#). Data collected through the AERR are the basis for EPA's National Emissions Inventory, which the Agency uses as we develop and review regulations, conduct air quality modeling, and conduct risk assessments. Other federal agencies, along with state, local, and tribal air agencies, and the public, also use the data the inventory provides.

EPA's proposal significantly broadens monitoring and reporting requirements for almost 190 hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) tied to cancer and other serious health problems. Under this proposal, 130,000 industrial plants and other facilities around the country would have to report their releases of HAPs either directly to EPA or through states that have federally approved programs.

The proposed updates would ensure that EPA has readily available data to identify places where people are exposed to harmful air pollution and to develop solutions. It also would provide data that communities can use to understand the significant sources of air pollution that may be affecting them – including data on highly toxic chemicals that can cause cancer and other serious health problems.

The proposed updates include:

- Requiring emissions of hazardous air pollutants (also called air toxics) to be reported.
- Ensuring that more facilities report each year, by using the same emissions thresholds every year to determine whether a facility's detailed emissions information must be reported.
- Requiring air agencies to report daily activity data for prescribed fires on state, tribal, private, or military lands. The activity data will help EPA improve the accuracy of emissions estimates from prescribed fires.
- Filling reporting gaps by requiring industry to report emissions for certain facilities located in Indian country or federal waters.
- Provisions to limit the burden on small businesses.

The public comment period closes on October 18, 2023, and a virtual public hearing is scheduled for August 30, 2023. These are the first updates to the AERR since 2015, and EPA is targeting June 2024 to issue the final rulemaking.

The proposal, information on upcoming informational webinars, and information about the public hearing will be available at the [Air Emissions Reporting Rule](#) website.

A webinar will be held on August 22, 2023, 1:00-2:30 pm Central to brief SLTs about the rule. **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.** Click [HERE](#) to Register

[AERR Informational Webinar](#) Registration is Required

Cleaner Trains: Opportunities for Reducing Emissions from America's Rail Network

On July 26, 2023, the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works, Subcommittee on Clean Air & Nuclear Safety held a hearing on reducing locomotive emissions (Senate Event 334500). The hearing featured a panel consisting of representatives from People's Collective for Environmental Justice, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, and the American Association of Railroads. A recording of the hearing and transcripts

of panel testimonies can be found here: <https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2023/7/cleaner-trains-opportunities-for-reducing-emissions-from-america-s-rail-network>

ITEM 2B. TCEQ Update (Vanessa DeArman)

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

Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (HGB) 2015 Eight-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) Attainment Demonstration and Reasonable Further Progress State Implementation Plan (SIP) Revisions

On May 31, 2023, the commission approved the proposal of the executive director's recommended HGB moderate area attainment demonstration and reasonable further progress SIP revisions.

The HGB 2015 eight-hour ozone NAAQS SIP proposal documents are available at the [HGB Latest Ozone Planning Activities](#) webpage.

The TCEQ held a public hearing on the proposed SIP revisions in Houston on July 11, 2023, and the public comment period closed on July 17, 2023. TCEQ staff are evaluating comments received during the public comment period.

Quadrennial Review

The TCEQ is conducting a review of agency rules in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). This process is undertaken to comply with statutory requirements at Texas Government Code, Section 2001.039, and the regulations at 1 TAC Chapter 91, Subchapter D. The purpose of rule review is to determine if the need for TCEQ's rules continues to exist and is limited to consideration of its rules for re-adoption, re-adoption with amendments, or repeal every four years. During this review, the commission will assess whether the reasons for initially adopting its rules continue to exist. Recommended changes to the rules in each applicable chapter of the TAC will not be considered for rule amendments as part of this review. Any such changes may be considered in a future rulemaking action by the commission.

To view the TAC chapters the commission is currently taking comment on, please visit the [Comment Online with TCEQ Public Comments](#) link on TCEQ's [Rules and Rulemaking](#) webpage. Thirty-day public comment periods for the chapters being reviewed open as notices are published in the *Texas Register*. To view the complete rule review schedule, please visit the [View TCEQ's Rule Review Plan](#) link on TCEQ's Rules and Rulemaking webpage.

Tax Relief for Pollution Control Property Advisory Committee

The TCEQ is accepting applications for potential Tax Relief for Pollution Control Property Advisory Committee members from the following affiliations: three industry representatives, one taxing unit representative, one environmental group representative, and one representative from a school or junior college district in which property is located that is or was previously subject to an exemption under Texas Tax Code, §11.31. Members whose terms are expiring may apply again and must reapply to be considered for reappointment. The application period is expected to open on June 30, 2023, and close on July 31, 2023. The terms will last four years, beginning January 1, 2024.

To apply, complete the nomination form and submit it to TCEQ at txrelief@tceq.texas.gov by 5:00 p.m. on July 31, 2023. Applications received after that date will only be considered if there are insufficient qualified applicants. You can apply to nominate yourself or someone else to the advisory committee, but TCEQ asks that only interested persons be nominated.

Further information, as well as the link to the nomination form, can be found on TCEQ's [Tax Relief Advisory Committee](#) website.

Questions regarding the advisory committee application process can be directed by phone to Elizabeth Sartain of the Tax Relief Program at (512) 239-3933 or by email to txrelief@tceq.texas.gov.

2024 Texas Environmental Excellence Awards (TEEA) Application Period Now Open

The TCEQ is now **accepting** applications for the 2024 TEEA through August 25, 2023. 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 on the [TEEA](#) webpage.

ITEM 2C. TERP Update (Nate Hickman)

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

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

Since our last meeting in June, there have been one exceedance of the 2008 75 ppb ground-level ozone standard and one exceedance of the 2015 70 ppb standard.

So far for 2023, the region’s maximum 4th highest value is 86 ppb as measured at the Houston East Monitor. Also, for the year the partial year regional design value for the 2021 through 2023 period is 79 ppb as measured at the Houston Bayland Park monitor followed by 78 ppb at the Houston East Monitor.

Moving on to PM conditions, you can see the annual average concentrations for all the region’s regulatory PM 2.5 monitors region going back to 2001 as well as the readings for those same stations over the most recent 12 months.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 3A. RAQPAC Officer Elections

The Subcommittee unanimously approved the following positions:

Chair	Vice-Chair
Joel Patterson	Charlie Gagen

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM 4A. Air Quality Remote Sensing – (Ebrahim Eslami, *HARC*)

Ebrahim Eslami gave an overview how we can use remote sensing in low color quality assessment. The discussion continued with some background on how sensing works. There are three cores to accessing air quality on a national local level. The most important one is ground measurement. As well as the models that back up the measurements and more recently air and space observation. Within the observation, a lot of gaps was noticed as being measured. Although they are relying on grant observation, they have a lot of uncertainty associated with them. Especially regarding the pollutants and the glutes. You must have the robust analysis to provide the information of different collective characteristics of the blue trans or clouds and aerosol in between. In the last 15 years different tools was developed that could help to minimize our effect.

Our scientist effort to act, collect, and access to this surface characteristic. But these days, because we have good computational power, then it provides a lot of advancement in the cloud computing and can do real data analysis that we can directly apply to our work. Information is missing in terms of the spatial distribution.

The goal of the remote sensing is to cover that, but still, we do get a lot of uncertainty and the missing value in remote sensing due to cloud. Considering this fact, we still get a lot of coverage especially compared with the ground.

ITEM 4B. Houston Air Monitoring Insights-Automated Weekly Reporting Tool – (Laura Campos, *Stat Analytics James Hendricks, Stat Analytics and Tony Mulenga, City of Houston*)

Laura Campos gave an update on weekly report that includes different air monitor from TCEQ. TCEQ has regulatory robust monitors that are maintained frequently and measure parameters such as VOC’s, PM 2.5, and others. They are maintained as available, and they measure things like PM 2.5, Ozone, and INN02. Discussion continued with what a weekly report detail. For starter, the top three monitor that have the highest exceedances of estimated thresholds by pollutants. We show VOC PM 2.5 and O2. This past week also included specialized VOC’s that include things like Benzene, Butadiene and Tulane.

Things to consider, if the outline is bigger, the size of the outline represents the exceedance, so a bigger outline indicates more exceedances. Also, there is concentration plots for the top three monitors that had exceedances above estimated thresholds.

Next, Anthony Mulenga gave an update on the wind rose specifics. The winter shows the direction that the pollution is coming from, and each color represents a different concentration level. The length of each spoke on the wind rose represents the relative frequency of the pollution readings from that direction. A comparison of the wind rose versus the map showed the similarities in the monitor and then the analysis picked up versus what the air tracker was able to pick up. This allows you to keep track of the time that is listed and check out all the potential pollution sources that are available that could have contributed towards their following or the directions at the map.

In closing, the goal is for this report to allow the stakeholders to identify matters that require further investigation and track specific pollutants across the city. Also, tracking can lead to actionable insights for any type of action that the stakeholders feel is warranted. This report is aimed at providing the identification of the matters that have already done that threshold, and the goal is that once these matters are identified, it will let the stakeholders focus on further analysis for any type of exceedance that is observed as well as if there is a problem with pollution in that area.

INFORMATION ITEMS

ITEM 5A. H-GAC Update

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ITEM 6A.

1. Andrew welcomed Pharr Andrews as the new employee for H-GAC. Pharr will be working specifically on the climate pollution reduction grant. In addition to becoming the lead over all initiatives for RAQPAC.
2. Joel Patterson updated the Stakeholders regarding his follow-up meeting with Sheniqua Smith to discuss initiatives surrounding air quality. They are in the process of working on a climate action plan. Updates will be given to the stakeholders as they are received.

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 7A.

Next meeting: August 31, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:34 A.M.