

REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, August 25, 2022 – 10:00 A. M.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Virtual Teams Meeting

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

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
METRO – Vincent Sanders

OTHERS PRESENT

City of Houston – Priya Zachariah
METRO – Sherman Hampton
832-369-4235

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 – James Garland
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 – Carlene Mullins
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Mike Burns
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Veronica Waller
Environmental Protection Agency – Jeff Riley
TCEQ – Vanessa De Arman
TCEQ – Nate Hickman
TCEQ – Alison Stokes

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 (7-28-2022)

Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee
August 25, 2022

Meeting summary held for quorum.

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_{2.5} NAAQS to below the current level of 12 ug/m³ (and down as low as 8 ug/m³) while retaining the 24-hour standard
- The scientific evidence and information do not call into question the adequacy of the current Primary PM₁₀ 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

On July 12, the EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) Staff Office announced two public meetings of the CASAC Ozone Review Panel. The first 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 was 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:

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.

The comment period for each proposal closed on June 13, 2022. EPA received relevant adverse comments on each proposed action (SIP submittal due dates) & is currently working to respond to comments and take final action. On July 27, 2022, EPA proposed a consent decree for the 2008 Ozone DAAD final actions ([87 FR 45104, 7/27/22](#)) that would establish a September 15, 2022 deadline for EPA to sign the 2008 Ozone DAAD notice of final action. The proposal’s 30-day comment period closed August 26th. EPA is effectively treating the September 15 proposed consent decree date as “final” and is working to finalize both the 2008 & 2015 ozone DAAD national rulemakings in the same timeframe. Based on past agency DAAD actions, these final rules will likely be effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

Inflation Reduction Act

EPA is excited about the new \$3B port program in the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) (Sec. 60102 “Grants to Reduce Air Pollution at Ports” on pp. 247-248). The bill directs EPA to fund grants and/or rebates for the purchase or installation of zero emissions equipment, related planning efforts, and climate action plan development at ports. EPA is in the process of sorting out implementation steps, and we encourage stakeholders/interested parties to sign up for the [Ports Initiative newsletter](#) to receive updates on this program and other funding opportunities to support efforts to reduce diesel pollution at ports.

ITEM 2B. TCEQ Update (Vanessa De Arman)

TCEQ staff notified members on the latest information:

North Wayside PM_{2.5} 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) – Deadline is September 23

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>.

ITEM 2C. TERP Update (Nate Hickman)

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

Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP)

- The Texas Clean Fleet Program (TCFP) closed on September 13, 2022. The TCFP provides grants for fleet owners in Texas to replace aging diesel vehicles with new hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles. Grants may reimburse up to 80% of the cost of the new vehicle. Grants are available for entities who own and operate a fleet of 75 or more on-road vehicles in Texas and who apply to replace at least 10 of those vehicles with new hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles.
- The Seaport and Rail Yard Areas Emissions Reduction (SPRY) Program is 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 Light-Duty Motor Vehicle Purchase or Lease Incentive Program (LDPLIP) is accepting applications 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 LDPLIP provides rebates statewide for the purchase or lease of an eligible new light-duty motor vehicle powered by compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), or hydrogen fuel cell or other electric drive (plug-in or plug-in hybrid).
- Acceptance of applications for hydrogen fuel cell or other electric-drive (plug-in or plug-in hybrid) vehicles under the LDPLIP has been suspended. The current number of applications and reservations received by the TCEQ for these vehicles exceeds the 2,000 rebate grants available for this funding period.
- The TCEQ will continue to accept applications for compressed natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas (propane) vehicles until the January 7, 2023 deadline.
- **Next up:**
- TCEQ will open the Diesel Emissions Reduction Incentive (DERI) Rebate Grants Program in the coming weeks. The purpose of the program is to encourage entities that own and operate one or more select types of on-road heavy-duty diesel vehicles or diesel non-road equipment to apply for grants that provide financial incentives for the early retirement of those older vehicles and equipment. The Rebate Grants allocation for FY 22-23 is projected to be \$75 million.
- TCEQ will open the Texas Natural Gas Vehicle Grants Program (TNGVGP) in October. The TNGVGP will award grant to reimburse up to 90% of the cost of a new or used natural gas-powered medium or heavy-duty vehicle. TCEQ projects that \$34 million will be available and grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 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
- 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. Contact TxVEMP staff by phone at (833) 215-TXVW (8989) or by email at VWsettle@tceq.texas.gov.

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 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.

Up Next:

- Texas Natural Gas Vehicle Grants Program – Summer 2022
- Emissions Reduction Incentive Grants (ERIG) – Fall 2022

- **Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Plan (TxVEMP) Program**

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. Contact TxVEMP staff by phone at (833) 215-TXVW (8989) or by email at VWsettle@tceq.texas.gov.

For more information visit our website www.terpgrants.org.

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

Since our last meeting in July, there have been zero exceedances of the 2008 75 ppb ground-level ozone standard and 2 exceedances 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 remains at 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 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. In June there was a spike as a result of some African dust storm. Since then, things have normalized. All the charts can be found on the RAQPAC meeting materials website under today’s meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 3A. RAQPAC Officer Elections (Grace Lewis)

To be held until quorum is met.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM 4A. Resilience and Sustainability at City of Houston- (Priya Zachariah, City of Houston)

Priya gave an overview on the work the city has done in the climate as of 2020. A lot of it has been done and is under implementation, but given the ambition of these plans, I think the requirement rather be well served to be strategic and intentional and have a sense of priorities in how we go about implementing.

Discussion continued that the city went through a greenhouse gas inventory. Data was from 2014. This was completed when we did our climate action plan. It was pointed out the 47% of greenhouse gas emission is from the transportation sector. Some come from passenger cars, and single occupancy vehicles. The other half from the use of energy, 2/3 come from commercial building and facility, and 1/3 from residential buildings. It was further discussed that these are essentially to inform the work in the climate action plan. The importance is to reduce the green house gas emission. The goal is to be a net zero city by 2050. The focus is energy and transportation, but also waste.

In closing, we are focused on addressing equity needs as we think about climate action plan. Coordinating efforts strengthens the relationship between climate mitigation through greenhouse gas reduction and carbon neutrality in accordance with the agreement and climate adaptation, which addresses the effects of change climate that we are experiencing today. We are actively looking at projects, programs and partnerships that are currently ongoing.

ITEM 4B. CMAQ Air Quality Performance Measures (Andrew DeCandis, H-GAC)

Andrew gave an overview to the members regarding where we are with air quality current process of performance measures. Performance measures were introduced in 2015 Fast Act. The Fast Act was intended to facilitate performance-based planning and assess the effectiveness of the CMAQ program. There are several performance measures that MPO's need to work on.

It was further discussed that the life cycle of a performance measure indicates its' a four-year measure at year zero the cycle develops the performance measure for year two for you to revisit and reassess the targets. To track progress on how you have done on your two-year targets and if necessary, to revise four-year targets, if needed. Discussion continued currently we are on our four-year targets. You track progress on your final four-year targets from previous cycle and then you develop new performance measures for the two and four years ahead.

Overall, this is based on a four-year average (2018-2021) of CMAQ emissions. Ultimately, the sum reported by CMAQ emissions is divided by four years to come up with a four-year average. It was pointed out that this is the only part that the procedure is prescribed to us. The rest is open to interpretations as an MPO can develop with their partners.

Discussion continued how you specifically expect those targets to be met and what you anticipate going into those targets. It was further discussed in year two, we will revisit those targets that were developed in year zero to reassess the four-year targets moving forward. A lot of the targets are revised. In year four, the progress is tracked and then you start to move forward and develop the new performance measures for two to four years ahead of where we are now. Targets were reviewed by H-GAC staff and advisory committees-TAQ, TAC, and TPC. We do anticipate making the request to TPC for their approval on September 30, 2022 with a submission to TxDOT by October 1, 2022.

ITEM 4C. Inflation Reduction Act Overview- (Andrew DeCandis, H-GAC)

Andrew notified the members regarding the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. Discussion continued that this moved quickly, pass the Senate on August 7, pass the House on August 12, and signed into Law on August 16. It was pointed out that the full Law includes provisions related to Texas. The focus will be specifically on-air quality related issues.

INFORMATION ITEMS

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

- None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ITEM 6A.

- PM 2.5 Advance Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 1:00 P.M.

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 7A.

Next meeting: September 29, 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:26 A.M.