
TWG Meeting Summary
September 10, 2026
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Microsoft Teams

Follow-up Actions from THIS MEETING

- **Anna Fildes** will prepare a summary of this meeting.
- **Madhu Venugopal** will work with Clint Anderson to address conformity-related topics identified at previous meetings, including QA tools, project lists, CSJs, and process improvements.
- **Venugopal** will distribute the upcoming web-based Conformity QA Tool for beta testing by MPOs actively engaged in conformity analyses.
- **Venugopal** will coordinate future discussions and information sharing regarding MOVES6 release candidate testing.

Next Meeting

- TWG Advisory Meeting - Thursday, **October 1, 2026** (tentative)
- TWG Quarterly Meeting - Thursday, **December 3, 2026** (tentative)

Participants

About 43 TWG participants attended via Microsoft TEAMS.

Venugopal led the meeting and began by welcoming attendees.

Updates and Introductions

Venugopal stated prior action items were completed.

Primary Discussion Item

- **Jon Lim (TTI)** presented on [MOVES4 vs. MOVES5: Comparing Emissions Inventory Trends and Transportation Conformity Implications](#)
 - **Chris Klaus (NCTCOG)** suggested developing a high-level comparison of emissions trends across MOVES model versions to help MPOs understand potential conformity implications.
 - **Madhusudhan Venugopal (TTI)** noted that the analysis reflects statewide inventory trends and that conformity impacts remain dependent on local data and assumptions.
 - **Vivek Thimmavajjala (NCTCOG)** asked questions regarding methodology and implications of the upcoming MOVES6 release.
 - **Chaoyi Gu (TTI)** explained that the trend inventories are based primarily on HPMS-derived activity data and noted that TTI is evaluating the MOVES6 release candidate, including impacts to EV assumptions, emissions rates, and workflow compatibility, with findings to be shared with the TWG. **Klaus** also

encouraged collaboration among agencies evaluating MOVES6.

- **Venugopal** led a discussion on **Ozone Attainment Status Updates and Potential Reclassification Implications for Texas Regions**
 - **Vivek Thimmavajjhala (NCTCOG)** asked about potential ozone nonattainment reclassification implications for Texas regions approaching attainment deadlines. Asked how TCEQ's recently submitted Clean Air Act Section 179B demonstrations could affect future classifications.
 - **Jeff Riley (EPA)** provided an overview of Section 179B demonstrations and explained that, if approved, affected areas could avoid reclassification to a higher nonattainment category despite failing to attain air quality standards due to international emissions transport. Noted that EPA is currently reviewing demonstrations submitted by Texas and that the issue is expected to remain an ongoing discussion topic as upcoming attainment deadlines approach.
 - **Thimmavajjhala** asked whether approval of Texas' demonstrations could effectively reverse previous classification changes, such as returning Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston-Galveston-Brazoria from severe to serious under the 2008 ozone standard. **Riley** noted that Texas has requested reconsideration of previous EPA reclassification actions, which could result in certain areas reverting to prior nonattainment classifications if EPA approves the demonstrations.
 - **Lyle Hufstetler (AACOG)** raised concerns regarding potential impacts on San Antonio's upcoming vehicle Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) program if classifications are later revised.
 - **Sarah Thomas (TCEQ)** and **Jeff Riley (EPA Region 6)** noted that EPA review is ongoing and that regulatory implications remain uncertain. EPA will provide updates as the evaluation progresses.
- **EPA Reconsideration Items Relevant to the TWG** – See EPA section below for more details.
- **Updates on Pending Conformity Determinations** - See MPO notes below for more details.

Agency Information & Updates

EPA, Jeff Riley

2024 Annual PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standard – Designations/Implementation

On March 12, 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 PM_{2.5} standard at 9.0 micrograms per cubic meter to provide increased public health protection, consistent with the available health science.

A lawsuit filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit (D.C. Circuit) by Kentucky's attorney general and 23 other state attorneys general in March 2024 sought to block implementation of the strengthened NAAQS. On November 24, 2025, EPA filed a motion for the court to vacate the 2024 PM_{2.5} NAAQS final rule instead of keeping the case in abeyance. In the motion, EPA argued that the final rule should be vacated because EPA's review of the NAAQS was not based on the latest scientific knowledge & used the same materials as the Agency's December 2020 decision to retain the level of the 2012 PM_{2.5} NAAQS.

D.C. Circuit Update: On Friday, June 26, the D.C. Circuit upheld the 2024 PM_{2.5} NAAQS and formally denied EPA's November 2025 motion to vacate the standard. The D.C. Circuit also denied the March 2024 petitions for review of that standard filed by industry and state petitioners. This ruling fully resolved the matters of the case and began a 90-day window for parties to appeal against the court's decision. On Friday, August 28, state and industry petitioners filed two petitions with the Supreme Court for writ of certiorari, seeking to appeal the D.C. Circuit's June 26 decision upholding the 2024 PM_{2.5} NAAQS.

Title I of the Clean Air Act requires that after EPA sets a new NAAQS or revises an existing standard, we must then designate areas in the United States as being in "attainment" or "nonattainment" with the standard. CAA Section 107(d)(1)(B) specifically requires the EPA to issue these initial area designations within 2 years of promulgating a new or revised NAAQS. The 2024 revision to the PM_{2.5} NAAQS was promulgated February 7, 2024, and on February 7, 2026, we passed that statutory deadline without having issued area designations.

On February 10, 2026, Earthjustice sent a [Notice of Intent](#) letter to the EPA Administrator on behalf of 18 organizations to commence a civil action against the EPA Administrator for

failure to perform the nondiscretionary duty under the CAA to promulgate area designations nationally within 2 years of the February 7, 2024, promulgation of the revised primary annual PM2.5 NAAQS. On April 13, 2026, Earthjustice filed a [Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief](#) in the Northern District of California Court (California Court).

California Court Update: Before the June 26 D.C. Circuit decision, EPA asked the California Court not to rule in this case until EPA has resolved the 2024 PM2.5 NAAQS itself; i.e., wait for the NAAQS to be decided on by the D.C. Circuit. Following the June 26 D.C. Circuit decision, on July 17, the California Court ordered EPA to promulgate final designations for the 2024 PM2.5 NAAQS by February 6, 2027. On September 2, EPA officially appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Ninth Circuit) over California Court's order to promulgate final designations by February 6, 2027.

EPA will share information on reconsideration of the 2024 annual PM2.5 NAAQS as it becomes available.

TCEQ, Sarah Thomas

Sarah Thomas had no comments.

MPO – State Roundtable (For those in attendance) – Status & Updates

Cecilio Martinez – AAMPO reported progress on the current conformity analysis. Updated networks were reviewed by TTI, revised, and resubmitted to the consultant for reruns and QA/QC. AAMPO expects to provide updated files to consultation partners for MOVES analysis once received. Also reported progress on reconciling the project clean list and noted that the conformity master schedule has been updated. Announced plans to recruit an air quality staff member in the coming months. **Fildes** will share the posting with TWG when available.

Bob Dickinson – SETRPC (Beaumont-Port Arthur) reported continued coordination with TPP staff, and consultants on development of demographic data for the 2055 TDM update. Expressed appreciation for agency support in helping advance the project timeline and meet requirements.

Claudia Valles – El Paso was unable to attend but provided a written update. Reported that El Paso MPO received FHWA comments on the PACP and is awaiting confirmation regarding whether road diet projects may be classified as exempt within the project list.

The MPO is updating its project list to include classifications for regionally significant, non-regionally significant, and exempt projects. Also reported that comments were received from TCEQ and FHWA on the TCR, and responses are being prepared for submittal next week.

Madeline Statkewicz – H-GAC announced that she has officially assumed the role of conformity lead for H-GAC. Reported that H-GAC conducted one-on-one meetings with interagency partners following the last conformity process to solicit feedback and gather input for the next cycle. H-GAC is actively developing its pre-analysis consensus plan and expects to kick off coordination with partners this fall. **Andrew DeCandis** thanked interagency partners for their collaboration and support during the most recent conformity determination.

Vivek Thimmavajjala – NCTCOG reported internal discussions regarding the next conformity determination and anticipated development of a draft schedule by late 2026 or early 2027. Noted that NCTCOG and several MPO partners are compiling a list of common and MPO-specific conformity challenges to support upcoming conformity work group discussions. Shared a draft spreadsheet with consultation partners and indicated a finalized version will be available soon.

Federal – State Roundtable (For those in attendance) – Status & Updates

Glendora Lopez - TxDOT ENV thanked TxDOT TPP, **Clint Anderson**, and other presenters for the recent planning-focused presentation, noting it was informative and well attended. The 2026 ENV Conference presentations have been published and are now available online: [Presentations - 2026 TxDOT Environmental Conference](#). Also reminded the group of the September 11 deadline for submitting ROI problem statements.

Janie Temple – TxDOT TPP announced that a federal continuing resolution was signed, providing government funding through December 11. Also emphasized the importance of standardizing staging tables, network data, and related datasets to improve consistency, reduce review times, and address recurring conformity issues.

Phillip Tindall - TxDOT TPP noted that, based on his review of the Continuing Resolution, contract authority programs such as PL and most STBG-funded activities appear funded through FY 2027 at current levels without increases.

TTI, Madhu Venugopal

Venugopal shared that the AQMS Air Quality Master Schedule has been distributed to nonattainment MPOs to review and maintain their current schedules. Provided an update on the development of a web-based conformity QA tool, which will soon enter beta testing with MPOs. Also discussed efforts to standardize network and staging table formats across MPOs and announced plans for annual updates of conformity-related datasets and factors to provide consistent, current data for analyses.

Finally, participants are encouraged to reach out to **Fildes** or **Venugopal** if they have something to present or share that would benefit TWG participants.

(Meeting Concluded)