

# Minutes

## Bi-State Region Air Quality Task Force

Friday, June 16, 2023, 11:00 a.m.

Bi-State Regional Commission

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

### Members Present:

Betsy Tracy, FHWA  
Chris Schmidt, IL DOT  
Debbi La Rue, Tri Count Regional  
Planning County  
Erica Williams, East Moline  
John Riches, Arconic  
Larry Burns, Rock Island County  
Lisa Perry, City of Rock Island

Lucie VanHecke, MetroLINK  
Matthew Johnson, IA DNR  
Richard Brunk, Rock Island County  
Rory Davis, IL EPA

### Others Present:

Gena McCullough, Bi-State Regional Commission  
David Kovarik, Bi-State Regional Commission

1. Introductions and Consideration of June 30, 2022 Meeting Minutes — John Riches motioned to approve the minutes and Larry Burns seconded. The motion carried.
2. Update from Resource Agencies on Current Air Quality Status/Issues — Rory Davis of the Illinois EPA and Matthew Johnson of the Iowa DNR provided reports for their respective states. Both states have experienced higher levels of poor air quality than usual. At a national level, the EPA proposed in January 2023 to update the acceptable primary annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels from its current 12.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to a range of 9.0 to 10.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. This has not yet been approved, but a decision could be made this fall. Secondary NO<sub>x</sub>/SO<sub>x</sub>/PM national ambient air quality standards may also be reviewed, but that deadline is not until 2024.

Questions were raised about the impact of the wildfires on the air quality metrics and if either state was considering asking for an exemption of standard exceedances. For Illinois, Mr. Davis said that because the standards were taken based on an annual measurement, this may not pose a significant impact on the overall measurement. However, if it were to continue, then IL EPA may look into obtaining an exemption. For Iowa, Mr. Johnson echoed Mr. Davis' sentiments, and stressed that exceptional event studies are resource intensive. Both representatives agreed that it would be better to wait and see if the high levels continued before committing to asking for an exception.

3. Local Status Report and Air Quality Issues — David Kovarik reviewed the status report provided in the agenda packet. The report is attached to these minutes.
4. Discussion of Iowa and Illinois EV Infrastructure — Chris Schmidt of IL DOT spoke about the state's efforts with the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) and the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant program. Regarding NEVI, all interstate highways around the Quad Cities except I88 meet the criteria to be designated as possible sites for EV charging stations. I88 has been submitted in a recent application to also meet that criteria. ILDOT is working to put an EV charging station in the Quad Cities, but the location is still being determined. There is no timeline on when the charging station might be installed. For CFI, there

are two grants available. In the Quad Cities area, MetroLINK has partnered with Moline, East Moline, Rock Island County, and Rock Island to put together an application for the community grant, which closed June 13.

5. Illinois Carbon Reduction Programs — Mr. Schmidt spoke again on Illinois' Carbon Reduction Program. As a part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA), states must develop a Carbon Reduction Strategy by November 2023. These plans must be updated every 4 years. IDOT is currently in the stakeholder engagement phase of their planning, and will be writing the plan early this fall. As part of this program, the Quad Cities will have around \$300,000 available for eligible project types, including public transportation improvements, energy efficient lighting, and intersection improvements.

Gena McCullough of Bi-State spoke on the MPO's carbon reduction plan. This program has similar goals as the IIJA, but tries to promote eco-driving, traffic flow improvement, and trip reduction strategies to reduce carbon emissions. There will be about \$785,000 in available funds from both Illinois and Iowa for this initiative.

6. Other Business —
  - a. The Task Force will monitor the Vehicle Technologies Offices for future funding opportunities.
  - b. AQTF will possibly have an additional meeting in late August or September. Members will be asked about a time preference at the beginning of August.
7. Adjournment — The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:50 a.m.

DK/clc

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