

**Texas Association of Regional Councils
Solid Waste Planners' Association
Semi Annual Meeting @ 1:30 p.m.
February 4, 2026
Minutes**

Members Present

Lyle Hufstetler, AACOG	Valerie Ramos, LRGVDC
Candilyn McLean, BVCOG	Karina Aguirre, MRGDC
Ken May, CAPCOG	Raul Diaz, MRGDC
David Lopez, CTCOG	Ariana Gonzalez, MRGDC
Salvador Ochoa Jr., CBCOG	Judy Crawford, NRPC
Erin M. Hernandez, CVCOG	Hannah Ordonez, NCTCOG
Lisa Rine, CVCOG	Lori Gunn, PRPC
Joshua Fleming, DETCOG	Veronica Diaz, RGCOG
Lisa Smith, ETCOG	James Moore, SETRPC
Emarii Davila, GCRPC	Ashlynn Brown, SPAG
Falen Bohannon, HOTCOG	Alexis Taylor, TCOG
Erin Livingston, H-GAC	PJ Sumner, WCTCOG
Melisa Gonzales- Rosas, LRGVDC	

Guests Present

Jessica Uramkin, TCEQ
Steve Shannon, Member of STAR and MSWRRAC, Texas State University Lecturer

Welcome

Ken May started the meeting at 1:35 PM.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Training & Updates

Jessica Uramkin presented.

Wrapping up FY24/25

Everyone submitted all of the required reports. Jessica asked for feedback, if there were too many reports due all at once. Some did agree that it was challenging to have everything due at once. Finance also found it challenging to complete the FY26/27 Application in addition to closing out FY24/25.

There was some confusion between the Equipment list in the SAR and the full inventory. TCEQ may look into combining them. Jessica reviewed the definitions to provide some clarity.

Equipment now over \$10,000 per the Texas Grant Management Standards (TxGMS). Controlled assets are much more broad and include things like computers, iPads, trailers, wood chippers, etc. When determining if items need to remain on the Controlled Asset Inventory list communities can use their own depreciation calculation method if they have one. Otherwise, the TxGMS has one.

FY26/27 grant

All applications have been received and the remainder of FY26 funds disbursed. The initial Implementation Project Summary for all grants is due by September 30, 2026. All projects must end by June 30, 2027. Additionally, projects can't begin before the TCEQ approval and the contract is executed. Make sure grantees know this.

Changes to IPS

The project description section has been updated and includes a list of things that should be mentioned in the project summary. One newer request is the inclusion of backup dates for events. We should be asking the grantees to provide it as a best practice in case the initial scheduled event must be cancelled or if turnout is bad.

TCEQ Permit Search Map Tool

Can currently be found on the main page of the TCEQ website. It includes facilities that have permits and registrations. It is helpful to use it in conjunction with Google Maps to more quickly locate the correct facility.

Upcoming Due Dates

March 30, 2026 – Both the FSR and SAR #1 are due

Assistance for New Solid Waste Coordinators

TCEQ conducts a series of one-on-one orientation calls for new solid waste coordinators. They have also been encouraging people to reach out to neighboring COGs when they have questions. People can use the email addresses from Jessica's emails if they want to reach out to the whole group. Jessica also mentioned she could share the COG contact list each time there is a new solid waste coordinator.

There was also a discussion that a short monthly call would be helpful. It would provide a time for everyone to ask questions and share things that are working well. Ken May is going to work with Kimberly Lile-Dowty to set this up.

SWIFR Projects

SWIFR projects are finishing up. Materials are going to be made available to everyone, such as materials posted online and trainings recorded.

COG Spotlight – Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

Melisa Gonzales-Rosas provided an overview of their SWIFR grant. The project was to develop a vermiculture food waste composting program and curriculum that could be implemented in middle schools. Much of the project progressed smoothly. The curriculum was developed by the Texas State Institute and TCEQ Region 1 is helping to get the program in the schools and will help maintain the program. There have been some setbacks with schools dropping out and scheduling around state testing, but LRGVDC continues to address the challenges as they arise.

The curriculum is available for all to take and implement.

Opportunities to Enhance Recycling Infrastructure for Local Economic Development

Steve Shannon presented. In Texas we average 25% contamination in the recycling stream. This is primarily due to lack of standardization of recycling programs. The US accounts for 6% of the world's population and makes 50% of the world's trash. Profit margin on collection is 20%. Profit margin on a MRF is 20%. Profit margin on composting is 15%. Profit margin on a landfill is 40%. The government doesn't give any subsidies for recycling like they do for a lot of other volatile industries.

He briefly discussed the TRIED-IT Summit held in Austin in May 2025 and the newly finished report that came out of it. We need to connect the economic development community, the recycling community, the government, and the public. Solid waste systems need to be at the regional level to get the needed economies of scale. If we want a workshop like this in our region reach out to STAR. TCEQ is willing to provide some staff time to help too.

SWPA Business Meeting

Ken started the meeting at 4:33 PM.

The group reviewed the meeting minutes from the September 2025 meeting. After correcting a typo, Ken May made a motion to approve the minutes and Falen Bohannon provided the second. The minutes were approved by all in attendance.

Discussion then focused on the need to update the bylaws to change the dues from \$25 to \$50 to address the budget shortfall. Hannah Ordonez made a motion and Melisa Gonzales-Rosas provided a second. The motion was approved by in attendance.

Ken asked for ideas on tours and presentations. Topics of interest included:

- Food waste
- Commodities, what is selling big (Circular)

- Plastic recycling and using recycled plastic in making new products
- Maybe some tours or volunteering, Food Bank or cleaning up litter.

Ken also mentioned the idea of finding someone to volunteer to get on the Keep Texas Beautiful Board and the STAR Board. Ken will send out an email when the opportunities come around.

Hannah made a suggestion to move the SWPA meeting portion adjacent to the TCEQ presentation. This adjustment will be implemented for the September 2026 meeting.

Candilyn McLean made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:54 PM.