

Texas Metals Recycling Entities Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

May 6, 2025

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Texas Metals Recycling Advisory Committee (TMRAC) was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on May 6, 2025, both in person at 5806 Guadalupe St and via video conference.

2. Roll Call

Arnold Gachman	Chairman	Metals Recycling Representative
David Bayouth	Member	Metals Recycling Representative
Carlos Breeden	Member	Metals Recycling Representative
Jim Shapiro	Member	Metals Recycling Representative
Osvaldo Alaniz	Member	Industry Impacted Representative
Robert Carson	Sargent	Houston Police Department
Anthony White	Sargent	Fort Worth Police Department
Mel Wright	Wright Scrap Metals Beaumont	President, Recycling Council of Texas
Vanessa Mayo	Assistant Chief	Texas Department of Public Safety
Ron Joy	Service Director	Texas Department of Public Safety
Audrey Rosales	Service Director	Texas Department of Public Safety
Mark Berry	Captain	Texas Department of Public Safety
Lisa Cargill	RSD Manager	Texas Department of Public Safety
Chris Lyons	RSD Manager	Texas Department of Public Safety
Josh Martin	Compliance & Enforcement Spec	Texas Department of Public Safety
Lawrence Cortez	Case Support Manager	Texas Department of Public Safety
Robert Hawkins	Special Assignments Manager	Texas Department of Public Safety
Pablo Luna	RSD Manager	Texas Department of Public Safety
Leslie Stevens	Sr. Personnel Admin Specialist	Texas Department of Public Safety
Renee Davis	Personnel Admin Specialist	Texas Department of Public Safety
Carlos Romero	Administrative Ops Specialist	Texas Department of Public Safety

3. Minutes from October 29, 2024

The minutes were unanimously approved as distributed.

4. Reports from Regulatory Services Division

a. Committee Members

SD Ron Joy welcomed Sergeant Anthony White from Fort Worth Police Department, and AT&T representative Osvaldo “Ozzie” Alaniz. Sergeant White has been with the Fort Worth Police Department for 20 years with police work ranging from the tactical team to detective work and is now most recently investigating property crimes, specifically over the Metal Theft Unit for the city of Fort Worth. Ozzie Alaniz is a lead investigator with AT&T Global Security for 8 years and prior to AT&T, Mr. Alaniz was a special agent with the FBI for 26 years.

Ron Joy stated the Advisory Committee has multiple vacancies. One of the vacancies consists of having substantial business experience with transactions involving the purchase or acquisition of catalytic converters. The other two vacancies are law enforcement representatives. A municipal law enforcement officer who serves in an area with a population between 200 and 500,000, and the other vacancy is a sheriff law enforcement officer who serves in a population over 500,000. SD Joy suggested to the committee members to spread the information to peers who may be interested in applying.

b. Enforcement

Captain Mark Berry updated the committee on the work that Lawrence Cortez and his team do regarding the analytical work on Metal Recycling Entities (MRE). The license issues that are currently ongoing is individuals don't apply for a license, the license has lapsed, or there is a possible criminal intent. Three weeks ago, Capt. Berry and his team went to Houston and conducted 7 MRE undercover operations and attempted to sell catalytic converters. The team was able to accomplish the task with a good outcome of 6 out of the 7 MRE's were complying. The MRE location that was not in compliance, purchased a catalytic converter with no paperwork for the catalytic converter and no identification from the individual. Capt. Berry reassured the committee and to all legitimate business owners that DPS does not go out and randomly target MRE locations to conduct undercover operations. DPS only targets locations where complaints or information is provided regarding specific location activities.

Capt. Berry also stated he is currently following up on a case where an individual had been stealing wire, possibly AT&T wire and selling it to an MRE.

c. Statistics Report

Service Director Ron Joy informed the committee with current ongoing statistics. In the state of Texas there are current 624 licensed MRE's. The current self-obligation is ensuring 2 MREs are inspected every year, once every six months. Since January 1, 2025, of all the inspections done, 90 have been administrative violations, which is only a small percentage of the total inspections that are conducted per year. Most of the inspections have passed and are complying.

d. Legislative Implementations Update

Service Director Ron Joy informed the committee, DPS is monitoring 8 bills, if passed could potentially affect the MRE program. Senate Bill 1646 and House Bill 3522 are the two bills with the most potential of being implemented. Nonetheless, DPS will keep monitoring all bills to ensure everyone is informed.

5. Industry Reports/Information

a. Metal Recycling Entities

Jim Shapiro discussed issues of theft by breaking into the MRE yards, breaking through fences. His specific location in Austin was vandalized again causing lots of repairs due to the destruction that is caused each time criminals break into the facility. Mr. Shapiro added, he received information regarding criminals possibly jamming alarm systems and cell phones in the San Marcos area when breaking in.

b. Law Enforcement Representative Member

Sgt. White added, individuals will hook up to a big metal recycling bin and pull it through the fence with a pickup truck to steal whatever material is in the bin. However, several arrests were made from this incident.

In addition, the record keeping has been a major issue in the Fort Worth area. Sgt. White gave the example of: if he went and sold 300 pounds of copper and was in a black F-250, the MRE puts down white Toyota Tacoma on the record keeping system with a random license plate number, completely throwing off the system. Therefore, anytime an investigator goes to investigate, the transaction is then not valid.

Sgt. Robert Carson commented on AT&T being very supportive in helping his department with investigations. In addition, he stated his area in the department does metal theft, but they will not get the case. He will not know about an MRE break in unless the department is called specifically because it goes down as a burglary or criminal mischief. Lastly, Sgt. Carson recommended all MRE owners to talk to the police officers that they have constant communication with. The officers do not ignore these incidents, the problem is that they don't see them due to the report being sent to a regular burglary and theft or property crime unit.

c. Industry Impacted by Metal Theft

Ozzie Alaniz, AT&T representative, stated Texas is the second leading state behind California in critical infrastructure theft. The major areas in the state of Texas are Austin, Dallas (Metroplex area), and Houston. There is a significant amount of activity where individuals are still cutting copper between electricity poles, which is also damaging AT&T's fiber. In addition, Austin PD arrested 3 individuals for cutting down about 100 feet of copper cable and were charged with organized crime.

Lastly, Mr. Alaniz informed the committee of a program AT&T started at the end of last year. It is a rewards program for information that would lead to hopefully identifying subjects that are involved in cutting and selling copper. He stated, he would make the information available to the committee to use as a tool but also to hopefully generate a lot of leads with the ongoing thefts.

Arnold Gachman mentioned there is hijacking with a more sophisticated way of trucking companies getting information that a truck is loaded with metals and alter the route for the truck to another route or place of shipment without the truck driver knowing any information. Insurance companies are aware of this situation and in many cases after the first or second incident are cancelling so in effect a company is left without insurance.

Sgt. Carson stated, ReMA is trying to address the issue, and he would be attending the following meeting as he is on the Advisory Board.

Mel Wright reminded the committee to use the Scrap Theft Alert system, which is a good tool.

6. Discussion and Possible Recommendation Items

Ozzie Alaniz mentioned of communication wire to combat the problem for AT&T. He informed the committee of AT&T rewards program for individuals who give information that may produce leads to copper theft.

7. Future agenda items

Arnold Gachman mentioned the open vacancies on the advisory committee. Currently the advisory committee representation is by population and will look into possibly working with the definition to change it to by region and/or by population.

8. Date of next meeting

Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

9. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m.