

Texas Metals Recycling Advisory Committee (TMRAC)

Meeting Notes
October 29, 2024

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Texas Metals Recycling Advisory Committee (TMRAC) was called to order at 10:05 a.m. on October 29, 2024, 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
JR Willis	Member	Industry Impacted Representative
Raul Flores	Member	Industry Impacted Representative
Joshua Dean	Member	Industry Impacted Representative
Robert Carson	Sargent	Houston 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
Natalie Robertson	Service Director	Texas Department of Public Safety
Mark Berry	Captain	Texas Department of Public Safety
Pablo Luna	RSD Manager	Texas Department of Public Safety
Josh Martin	Compliance & Enforcement Spec	Texas Department of Public Safety
Jennifer Wessels	Supervisor	Texas Department of Public Safety
Steve Moninger	Sr. Policy Analyst	Texas Department of Public Safety
Amanda Contrino	Sr. Policy Analyst	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 May 14, 2024

The minutes were unanimously approved as distributed.

4. Reports from Regulatory Services Division

a. Committee Members

Service Director Ron Joy stated there are 3 (three) vacancies for the committee. They are a law enforcement municipality representative whose population is over 500,000, a law enforcement member whose population is between 200,000-500,000, and a Sheriff's Department representative whose population is over 500,000. He added that he has attempted to contact representatives from all three areas, with no success.

b. Statistics Report

Service Director Ron Joy informed the committee members that catalytic converter transactions are down about 57%. In Central Texas the area accounts for about 37% of all transactions and are down 60%. SD Joy stated he believed the statistics could be related to the legislature in 2023 and to the price of metals that are not a high commodity right now. In addition, JR Willis agreed with SD Joy and stated he works with individuals to ensure all paperwork is following all guidelines and policies therefore he has also noticed the transaction percentage go down due to the legislature.

c. Legislative Implementations Update

Service Director Ron Joy addressed the committee stating that in the last legislative session (Senate Bill 224) the department had significant results in funding to the Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention Authority (MVCPA) directly related to Catalytic converters. As an agency, it was asked and received funding for a total of 16 positions. 11 of those positions are currently filled with program investigators, entity investigators or analytical work. The rest of the positions should be filled by the end of 2024. In addition, 14 of those positions will be program investigators that are going to be specifically dedicated to MRE's who have been tasked on the enforcement side, to be liaisons to Captain Mark Berry and to their local law enforcement. The two main purposes for being liaison's is to be a resource if the program investigators have a need to know what is regulated metal and material so they can help educate local law enforcement agencies. The following main purpose is to be a resource if an area has increased crimes and is communicated in order to have a close partnership throughout the whole state.

Jim Shapiro asked, with the transactions down about 60% on the catalytic converters, what is the theft rate and what is being done? SD Ron Joy stated, there is not a centralized location for monitoring theft rate and what is being done besides contacting each local law enforcement agency individually for statistics. Robert Carson, Houston PD Representative added his local area has seen a decrease.

d. Enforcement

Service Director Ron Joy will have Captain Mark Barry talk to JR Willis about the occurring freight theft. Loads are being dispatched and intercepted by thieves who are changing the route destinations sending them to a different location. Most of the time the driver has nothing to do with this issue.

5. Industry Reports/Information

a. Metal Recycling Entities

Jim Shapiro stated the Austin local yards are still experiencing minimal enforcement due to the timeframe it is taking to get their licenses renewed before expiring.

b. External Law Enforcement Agencies

Robert Carson, Houston PD Representative, stated their local law enforcement agency has recovered freight theft loads recently from various areas.

c. Industry Impacted by Metal Theft

Mel Wright mentioned the use of Scrap Theft Alert system, which is a good tool for local law enforcement agencies to utilize. The system helps alert individuals of stolen freight when it is reported on the application.

6. Discussion and Possible Recommendation Items

a. Cash Card Survey Results

Service Director Ron Joy stated a survey was sent out to 100 Metal Recycling Entities with the most transactions and cash card transactions resulting in only 8 Metal Recycling Entities providing comments. The survey results were also sent out to the Advisory Committee member via email.

b. Infrastructure copper theft

Raul Flores stated copper wire theft is increasing and becoming a larger problem. There are reward programs for tipsters in Houston, Dallas, and Austin. Statewide messages will go out in June of 2025 regarding the reward program for copper wire theft. In addition, Raul Flores states his industry will work with the Texas Legislature in trying to increase the charge for copper wire theft from a misdemeanor to a felony. Raul also mentioned pamphlets were discussed for distribution to MRE's with information of what to look for in wiring.

7. Future agenda items

Nothing at this moment.

8. Date of next meeting

Date of the next meeting will be held May 6, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

9. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.