

Vehicle Inspection Advisory Committee (VIAC)

Meeting Notes

June 9, 2021

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Vehicle Inspection Advisory Committee (VIAC) was called to order at 1:00 p.m. on June 9, 2021 via WebEx Teleconference.

2. Roll Call

Present

Anthony Moffa	Chairman	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Robert Ferre	Co-Chairman	Subject Matter Expert for Fuel & Emission Systems
David Campbell	VIAC Member	Station Owner
Julie Claussen	VIAC Member	Emissions Analyst
David Lewis	VIAC Member	Emission Testing Equipment Manufacturer
Kevin Pishkar	VIAC Member	Automotive Repair Manager
Jason Hester	RSD Assistant Chief	Texas Department of Public Safety
Pablo Luna	RSD Service Director	Texas Department of Public Safety
Chris Sims	RSD Service Director	Texas Department of Public Safety
Steve Moninger	RSD Sr. Policy Analyst	Texas Department of Public Safety
Anne Yusim	RSD Manager	Texas Department of Public Safety
Lisa Cargill	RSD Manager	Texas Department of Public Safety
Lawrence Cortez	RSD Supervisor	Texas Department of Public Safety
Robert Hawkins	RSD Asst. Manager	Texas Department of Public Safety
Krystal Sanders	RSD Executive Assistant	Texas Department of Public Safety
Leslie Stevens	RSD Executive Assistant	Texas Department of Public Safety
Edgar Gilmore	Program Coordinator	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Steven Hagood	Agency Liaison	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Guy Hoffman	Agency Liaison	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Donna Huff	Agency Liaison	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Nicholas Landuyt	Agency Liaison	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
David Serrins	Agency Liaison	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Sarah Thomas	Agency Liaison	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

3. Minutes from March 10, 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

4. Remarks from DPS and TCEQ

- *DPS*

- Pablo Luna reminded everyone that all inspection station licenses expire on August 31, 2021 and there is not a grace period. Pablo Luna noted that only station owners or buyers are able to renew station licenses. If the station owner or buyer doesn't remember or is unable to reset their password, Pablo Luna instructed that they should contact the VIC helpdesk for further assistance.
- Steve Moninger reviewed HB-3026 with the committee. The bill relates to the operation and regulation of certain automated motor vehicles. HB-3026 would allow changes to the inspection requirements for those vehicles and will be discussed during the rule proposals.
- Mr. Moninger also reviewed SB-1064 which relates to the extended registration (from one year to three years) on certain county fleet vehicles. Pablo Luna added that the bill applies to counties that have a population of at least 3.3 million. County vehicles have the ability to receive an inspection and the registration is then extended.
- Assistant Chief Jason Hester notified the committee that SB-1728, which proposed taxing electric vehicles for total miles driven, did not pass. Currently, there isn't a requirement for adding the odometer reading to the vehicle inspection report, which would be the key indicator for the total miles driven from the previous year. Because electric vehicles don't use gasoline, they are not paying any of the state gas tax which helps pay for road improvements. Pablo Luna advised the committee that odometer readings aren't a required item for vehicle inspection, that it is currently optional information for the vehicle inspection report and the data is only as good as what the inspector enters. It is not automatically captured.

- *TCEQ*

- David Serrins updated the committee on TCEQ's continuing efforts on SB-711. The bill entails adding safety recall information to the vehicle inspection report. This project requires software updates that are sent to the emission analyzers through a required download. If not downloaded within a specified time, stations are locked out of the network and will not be able to perform inspections until the update is complete. The deadline was May 31st, and the lockout began June 1st. Safety recall information is now included on the vehicle inspection report at every location that offers an inspection in the 17 emission counties.

Pablo Luna offered comment that DPS has reached out to their vendor to update the software on VIC units for safety only stations. DPS has contacted the Department of Motor Vehicles, to alert them to the change to the vehicle inspection report that they would start seeing during vehicle registration renewals.

5. Old Business

- No comments in reference to old business.

6. New Business

- *Remote Vehicle Inspection Proposal*

- Ashlie Walker and Nicholas Orchard, industrial designers proposed the need for remote inspections. They conveyed that in a fast-changing world, we need to adapt and offer new services that fit new lifestyles. They discussed the inconveniences of waiting for an inspection, provided statistics of remote workers in Texas, discussed the benefits for the State if more vehicles are inspected, and how remote inspections would work.

Pablo Luna reviewed the possible operational challenges with the remote vehicle inspection such as: revising laws, the need for someone to propose a bill, and changes to rules.

Assistant Chief Jason Hester noted we have statutory requirements that would have to be fulfilled, administrative rule changes, along with technical limitations within the system.

Steve Moninger provided input in reference to the statute and rules. He indicated that there are various requirements in the statute and in the rules that refer to a fixed location for inspections, which would pose as a challenge for this proposal.

Chair Anthony Moffa added that he liked the idea of remote inspections but felt like there may be oversight dealing with the general public. He fears people may take advantage of the system. David Campbell shared the same concerns with the committee in reference to detailed safety inspections. The committee took no action on this item.

- *VI Rule Proposal*

- Steve Moninger explained the bill relating to Exemptions for Autonomous Vehicles (HB-3026). Initial versions of the bill included windshield wipers, mirrors, muffler, etc. The final bill had no specific references to inspection items. The rule proposal will exempt autonomous vehicles from inspection of the steering system, including power steering, mirrors, windshield wipers, sun screening devices, and front seat belts. Mr. Moninger requested feedback from the committee on other inspection items that may be applicable. Pablo Luna added that language should be included in the proposal, noting that the motorist must be available with the autonomous vehicle during the inspection to assist with locating items on the vehicle if necessary.
- Edgar Gilmore questioned if the rule change was approved, would DPS see a need to change the inspection emissions analyzers safety only inspection sequences, since TCEQ doesn't have a "N/A" option. Edgar stated a software change would need to occur in the event the proposal was adopted, unless we were to require the vehicle owner take the vehicle to a VIC station. In response, Mr. Moninger indicated the thought was for the inspector to indicate the vehicle passed, in order to avoid any form of administrative action against the inspector for violating the inspection process. Mr. Moninger did not believe there as any need for a software change, but suggested DPS and TCEQ may need to discuss this further Mr. Serrins pointed out that HB 3026 says that for these items they will be given a pass. Mr. Moninger stated that HB 3026 only applies to autonomous vehicles, while this rule applies only to electric vehicles and the bill's language does not apply to the rule's exempted items. Mr. Moninger suggested we might need to have a subsequent discussion with TCEQ.
- Assistant Chief Hester indicated that the statute considers a vehicle's exempt to have passed inspection, and therefore no software change is required. Mr. Gilmore withdrew his issue.
- Anthony Moffa proposed a roll call vote after a detailed review of the VI Rule proposal. All committee members were unanimous in their acceptance of the proposal.

7. Public Comments

No public comments.

8. Future Agenda Items

Please provide any future agenda items to Anthony Moffa or Robert Ferre.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for September 15, 2021.

10. Adjourn

Anthony Moffa adjourned the meeting at 2:46 p.m.