



Comments to the H-GAC on the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Good morning committee members, staff.

My name is Harrison Humphreys and I am with Air Alliance Houston. I'll be talking about the drafting of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan item this morning.

I'm giving comments here today to deliver a very simple request: I ask that the Transportation Policy Council acknowledge the realities of climate change.

This is a very simple step that cities, counties, townships, villages, districts, states, nations, and many other conceivable governing bodies across the US and the world have taken. [Acknowledging that climate change caused by human activity](#) is a scientifically verifiable fact and something should be done to mitigate it is [a step millions of Texans have taken](#). And yet, in three years straight I've attended every manor or H-GAC meeting, I have rarely heard it even mentioned, much less acted upon.

The links between our transportation systems and the rapidly heating climate are undeniable. In 2019, transportation was the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions in the US; most of this came from passenger vehicles. In Houston, [47% of our GHGs come from transportation](#). In a recent report, TxDOT acknowledges climate change as fact: quote, "Almost half of the human activity CO2 emissions between 1750 and 2011 have occurred in the last 40 years primarily from fossil fuel emissions (e.g., coal, natural gas, gasoline, oil and/or diesel). According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), this increase in GHG emissions is projected to contribute to future changes in climate." end quote. Disturbingly, they also conclude TxDOT has no obligation to do anything about it, but at least they got the first part right.

Given what we know about climate change - its sources and impacts - the H-GAC staying silent on this issue is no longer acceptable. In fact, refusing to act on the information we have is immoral. The IPCC just this summer released the most damning report yet. It finds that a hotter future is now inevitable, one in which nearly a billion

people will suffer from widespread flooding, millions more from drought, and food systems that will collapse as entire ecologies deteriorate.

I understand that it's difficult to conceive of a problem that is so intangible, particularly one in which the worst consequences will not be felt until most on this committee are long dead. But failing to understand or acknowledge the severity and urgency of climate change does not absolve this body of its responsibilities as leaders of this region. We must start planning around this issue now.

Myself and my fellow residents here commenting today plan on being an active participant in the RTP drafting process, and will advocate that the 2050 plan should include specific commitments from the H-GAC to align planning practices, project evaluation, and funding distribution with the goal of GHG reduction. But for today, all I ask is that this body takes the very simple first step of acknowledging the reality of climate change and that this body can have a role to play in mitigating it.

