

Environmental Review Advisory Panel

Environmental Quality Board Environmental Review (ER) staff will be creating an ER Advisory Panel to modernize and improve the ER Program.

I. Background

The Environmental Quality Board (EQB or Board) has a general responsibility to “monitor the effectiveness” and “take appropriate measures to modify and improve” the effectiveness of the ER rules (Minn. Rules 4410.0400, subp. 1). In 2015 Minnesota legislative session, the EQB was directed to streamline environmental review, per Laws of Minnesota 2015, Chapter 4, Article 5, Section 33.

To that end, the EQB initiated an ER Mandatory Categories rulemaking in early 2016. The scope of the rulemaking is to gain efficiencies through housekeeping such as aligning rules and statutes; making technical updates and corrections. Regardless, comments received during public meetings and in stakeholder engagement periods have raised much larger policy questions—outside the scope of this rulemaking.

Additionally, in an effort to improve effectiveness and efficiency, the ER program initiated several opportunities in 2016 for public input, including:

- A results based accountability workshop to develop ER program measures;
- Project-specific surveys for responsible governmental units (RGUs) and citizens; and,
- Public meetings and stakeholder engagement periods to shape the Mandatory Categories rulemaking.

Based on all of the feedback received over the past year, the EQB is convening an ER Advisory Panel (Minn. Stat. 116D.03, subd. 2) charged with modernizing and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the ER program.

The scope of the work will be determined by the panel, but they will be focused on any number of the following policy issues that have been raised over the last year:

- Human health impacts
- Proposed ER exclusions
- Climate change considerations
- Alternative review
- Environmental justice
- ER process streamlining

II. Environmental Review Advisory Panel

- **Purpose** – The purpose of the ER Advisory Panel (Panel) is to review the ER program, identify areas of concern, and propose changes to modernize the program.

- **Outcomes** – Within 12 months of the first meeting of the Panel, a final report must be produced. The report must document the activities and recommendations for addressing the topics agreed to by the Panel.
- **Panel Members and Staff** – 12-15 participants will be selected to evenly represent citizens, industry/project proposers, and ER practitioners (state agency and local government staff). The Panel will be asked to elect Chairs to work closely with staff on agenda development. Staff support will be provided by the EQB.
- **Facilitation Services** – Management Analysis and Development will be retained to design, facilitate, and document the process.
- **Meeting Frequency** – The 12-15 Panelists, EQB staff and facilitator will meet regularly once a month in person. The meetings will be approximately four hours in length.
 - In some instances, subgroups focusing on specific topic areas may meet outside of the regularly scheduled meeting time.
 - Panel meetings will be open to the public and noticed three business days prior to the meeting.
- **Meeting Locations** – At least two regularly scheduled meetings will be held outside of the Twin Cities metro area. Meeting locations will be in places convenient to Panel members.

If you are interested in participating in the Environmental Review Advisory Panel, please send an email or US mail to Courtney Ahlers-Nelson at the EQB expressing your interest by 4:30pm on January 16, 2017.

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Your expression of interest must include the following in **500 words or less**:

- “Environmental Review Advisory Panel” in the email subject line or cover page
- Contact information (Note: information provided is public information)
- The geographic area you may represent
- Applicable background information
- Description of your interaction with environmental review
- Description of the unique perspectives you will bring to the Panel