



**Date:** December 3, 2021

**To:** Subcommittee for Pilot Program Implementation Meeting, November 30, 2021

**From:** Denise Wilson, Environmental Review Director, Environmental Quality Board

**RE:** Meeting Summary

**Members Present:**

Chair: Nicholas Martin, Public Board Member Congressional District 4

- Grace Arnold, Commissioner Department of Commerce
- Alan Forsberg, Public Board Member, Congressional District 1
- Mehmet Konar-Steenberg, Public Board Member: Congressional District 5
- Ben Yawakie, Public Board Member: Congressional District 3

**Proposal for Pilot Program implementation**

Environmental Quality Board (EQB) Staff provided a draft proposal for design and implementation of the Pilot Program that will assess the effectiveness of climate information included on the draft revised Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) form. The proposal included the following elements for consideration of the Subcommittee and other meeting attendees:

- Recruitment strategy
  - Purpose: ensure that all designated state and local governmental units (Responsible Governmental Units or RGUs) and technical consultants that will be responsible for implementing any approved changes to the EAW form are aware of the opportunity to participate in the Pilot Program.
  - Pilot Program recruitment timeline is ongoing through July 2022.
  - Methods for recruitment include posting in *EQB Monitor*, through social media and targeted emails using historic EQB data.
- Engagement opportunities
  - Purpose: ensure Pilot Program participants, impacted groups and communities have the opportunity to weigh-in on the effectiveness of climate information included on the draft revised EAW form.
  - Pilot Program Collaborative Forum framework, designed to support and get feedback from Pilot Program participants as they implement the draft revised EAW form.
  - Strategies for opportunities for engaging all Interested Environmental Review Program Participants
    - Opportunities for other interested stakeholders, including the consumer of environmental review data, to provide feedback, such as through comments on EAWs that are using the draft revised EAW form.
    - Opportunities to receive updates on Pilot Program status, such as attending ERIS and Board meetings.

- Expectations for Pilot Program participants
  - Use the draft revised EAW form, when relevant. An RGU will retain discretion for using the revised draft EAW form on a specific project. They also retain discretion for how to respond to individual questions on the form, based on the nature and location of the project.
  - Pilot Program participants should expect to attend recurring collaborative Forums.
  - Pilot Program participants should expect to support other participants, and act as a resource with subject matter expertise for different project types, as they implement the revised draft EAW.
  - Pilot Program participants should expect to provide information requested by SPPI about their experiences implementing the draft revised EAW form.

### **Public Input**

During the meeting, 13 members of the public attended. There were 2 members of the public who provided input. Some highlights from their comments are listed below. You can review the recording of their comments On the [SPPI web page](#) starting at minute 1:35.

- Transparency is very important in understanding how decisions are reached, and data from the public should be gathered to better understand how the data was used.
- One desired outcome of the Pilot Program is a better and shared understanding of how a variety of stakeholders use EAWs and the resulting data, specifically members of the public and advocacy groups.
- The Subcommittee must endeavor to stay on task and adjacent issues should be explored elsewhere.
- Dairy farmers are getting hit with many new climate-related programs and requirements and it is a burden to navigate all of these.
- Concern that business will move outside of Minnesota due to new requirements.

### **Subcommittee discussion**

- The Pilot Program will focused only on the effectiveness of the climate information portions, and will not assess the effectiveness of other areas of draft revised EAW form.
- The staff proposal seems to be on the right track for the design and implementation elements of the Pilot Program.
- It is important to have a transparent process and allow participating RGUs a safe space for learning and deliberation.
- Consider reaching out to local government organizations and associations to help to encourage local government registration in the Pilot Program.
- It is important to ensure our recruitment efforts include a specific strategy for Environmental Review practitioners from greater Minnesota local governments, especially small cities and counties.
- It is important that we find a way to engage greater Minnesota Environmental Review practitioners that may not have active projects undergoing environmental review and did not register to be a part of the Pilot Program; and who have limited staff time to be involved. It is important that they have the opportunity to influence decision making on the EAW form.
- The Pilot Program outcomes can be used as a way to ensure MN State Agencies are consistent in climate change messaging.
- Subcommittee members are welcome to participate in the Collaborative forums.