ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROGRAM

CLIMATE CALCULATOR

MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Background

Minnesota's Environmental Review Program provides decision makers and the public with an understanding of the impact a proposed project will have on the environment. Recognizing that climate change is an important environmental issue, the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) added two climate-related questions to the environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) form in 2022.

Local governments, businesses, and the public are seeking reliable tools to evaluate how climate change affects their communities, economies, and ways of life. In 2023, the EQB received legislative funding to develop a climate calculator tool to support implementation of the climate-focused revisions to the EAW form. That work is now being completed, and the climate calculator will be available July 1, 2025.

Goal

The goal of developing a climate calculator was to make climate assessment consistent, effective, and efficient. The tool is designed to ensure accuracy and consistency of the climate information provided on the EAW form while reducing the time and cost for project proposers to provide information and state and local government agencies to assess applicable climate information.

A reliable method for estimating a project's potential greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is key to successfully filling out an EAW. EQB received broad input that responsible governmental units (RGUs) want a well-vetted tool that uses Minnesota-and sector-specific data for completing EAWs.

The climate calculator tool is now available to facilitate the gathering of climate information within the EAW. The calculator provides additional accuracy, transparency, and consistency in answering EAW items 7 and 18 while reducing the time, cost, and uncertainty for government units and project proposers.

What does it do?

- ✓ Estimates the GHG emissions for a project's lifetime. Actual emissions will vary.
- ✓ Helps users answer the EAW climate questions (items 7 and 18).
- ✓ Uses Minnesota-focused data.
- ✓ Estimates GHG mitigation and climate adaptation.
- ✓ Allows users to adjust to fit their individual project needs.

Using the calculator is **not** a requirement when filling out an EAW and is **not** a change for EAW expectations.

Who can use it?

Government decision makers	Project proposers	Members of the public

Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
651-757-2877 | Info.EQB@state.mn.us | eqb.state.mn.us

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FAQs

What is the calculator's scope?

- Accounts for the construction and operation for the project's life
- Includes direct and indirect emissions.
- Includes adjustable project inputs for project specific results.
- Provides qualitative mitigation options.
- Provides information for qualitative climate resiliency.

Does the calculator change the current EAW climate guidance?

No, the calculator has not changed the process for answering Item 7 and 18. The calculator is an optional tool to support those filling out an EAW and is designed to be an inclusive of Minnesota-based data for most project types.

What tools can I use when filling out the EAW climate questions?

The EQB offers guidance on frequently used tools, but no specific tool is required. The RGU has discretion in the methods used to fill out the EAW. The RGU and project proposer should be comfortable with the reliability of the estimates and information provided in their EAW.

Can I still use the calculator if I don't have all the project information?

Yes! Many questions have default values and Minnesota-based averages that can be used in place of project-specific information. For inputs without defaults, a best estimate is a reasonable choice.

Where can I find information about using the calculator?

We'll have a step-by-step user guide on EQB's website, recorded trainings, and ongoing support provided by EQB staff. Please reach out to Stephanie Aho (stephanie.aho@state.mn.us) or the EQB environmental review inbox (env.review@state.mn.us) if help is needed.

Climate calculator = consistent, efficient, and effective EAWs

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