

# August 2023 Environmental Quality Board meeting

**Wednesday, August 16 from 1 – 4 p.m.**

## Join online via Teams

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## Participating in meetings

### Attending virtually

Members of the public may join the meeting virtually using the Teams link at the board meeting webpage link above. Please review the [Guide to Teams Participation](#) for additional information.

### Joining the virtual meeting at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency office

Participate in the meeting virtually with support from Environmental Quality Board (EQB) staff at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's St. Paul office (520 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155) lower level – central conference room. All visitors must sign in at the front desk.

Transportation options:

- Bicycle: Visit the [Saint Paul Bike Map](#) webpage for route information. Outdoor bicycle parking is available to the left of the front doors near the loading dock.
- Transit: Use [Metro Transit's Trip Planner](#) to determine the best routes and times.
- Car: You may park in a Visitor Parking space in the parking lot just outside the front door, or park in one of the visitor lots. The visitor lots are the Blue Lot (Olive St. and University Ave.) and the Jupiter Lot (on Grove St. across from the Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center); please see the [parking map](#). Parking in these lots is free of charge. You must register your vehicle at the front desk upon arrival.

### Accessibility

Please contact Environmental Quality Board (EQB) staff at least one week prior to the event at [info.EQB@state.mn.us](mailto:info.EQB@state.mn.us) to arrange an accommodation. Meeting materials can be provided in different forms, such as large print, braille, or on a recording.

### Public engagement opportunities at EQB meetings

EQB encourages public input and appreciates the opportunity to build shared understanding with members of the public. The opportunities for public engagement for this meeting are below.

## Oral public comment

In this meeting, the board will accept oral public comment during agenda item 4 (specific to that topic) and agenda item 6.

Procedure and guidelines for giving oral public comment:

- If you wish to speak:
  - Virtual: when prompted, use the “raise hand” feature in Teams, located at the top of your screen.
  - In person: sign up at the welcome table before the meeting starts.
- Your remarks will be limited to two (2) minutes. When necessary, the chairperson may limit commenters’ time for remarks to ensure there is equal opportunity for the public to comment.
- When the chairperson calls on you to speak:
  - Introduce yourself before beginning your comment.
  - Please keep your remarks to those facts which are relevant and specific, as determined by the chairperson, to the agenda item at hand.
  - Please be respectful of board members, staff, and other meeting participants. Avoid questioning motives. The chair, vice-chair, or other presiding officer will not tolerate personal attacks.
  - Please note that the chair will use their discretion for directing public comment to ensure the board’s ability to effectively conduct business.

## Written public comment

You may submit written comment to EQB by emailing your letter to [info.EQB@state.mn.us](mailto:info.EQB@state.mn.us) or mailing to: Environmental Quality Board, 520 Lafayette Road, Saint Paul, MN 55155. Comments must be received by EQB staff **by noon the day before the meeting**.

Staff will compile letters, make them available to members and the public online, and attach them to the public record. Any written comments received after this deadline will be included in the next meeting packet.

All comments will be made available to the public. Please only submit information that you wish to make available publicly. EQB does not edit or delete submissions that include personal information. We reserve the right to not publish any comments we deem offensive, intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying, or that contain any other inappropriate or aggressive behavior.

## Agenda

### 1. Welcome and roll call

Nancy Daubenberger – Chair, EQB; Commissioner, Department of Transportation

### 2. Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from the June 21, 2023, Environmental Quality Board meeting on packet page 5
- Preliminary agenda for the August 16, 2023, Environmental Quality Board meeting

### 3. Executive Director’s report

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

### 4. FY24 Workplan overview, public comment, and approval

**Type of Item:** Decision

**Summary:** The Executive Director and staff will present the proposed organizational workplan for FY24. A high-level discussion of the workplan is provided in the memo on page 13 and the full workplan is on page 22 of the packet.

**Public comment:** The board welcomes oral public comment on the FY24 workplan prior to its discussion and approval. Please see guidance and procedures on packet page 2.

**Outcome:** The Board reviews and approves the organizational workplan and approves authority to implement it

**Presenters:** Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB; Kayla Walsh, Environmental Review Program Administrator, EQB; Erik Dahl, Planning Director – Special Projects, EQB; Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, State Pollinator Coordinator, EQB

### 5. Strategic Plan

**Type of item:** Informational

**Summary:** The EQB’s organizational strategic plan covers the years 2018 to 2023. A revision and update for the next five years is needed. The Board will hear about the planned process to review the strategic plan and identify what we can leverage from the existing EQB Strategic Plan to guide our decision-making and actions for the next five-year planning cycle. The strategic plan is on page 30 of the packet.

**Outcome:** The Board understand the proposed process for the strategic plan update and when they will: 1) be asked to participate in facilitated activities; and 2) have the opportunity to offer insights, thinking and ideas into specific areas of the Strategic Plan.

**Presenter:** Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

### 6. Public comment

The board welcomes oral public comment. Please see guidance and procedures on packet page 2.

After the June 21, 2023 meeting, the Board received public comments in follow up to item #5 of that meeting agenda. The public comment is included on page 38 of the packet.

### 7. Closing and adjournment

## June 2023 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, June 21, 2023 | 1:00-4:00 p.m. | 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155, lower level conference rooms and via Teams.

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### Minutes

#### 1. Welcome and roll call

Chair Nancy Daubenberger called to order the regular meeting of the Environmental Quality Board.

Members present: Joseph Bauerkemper, Stacie Christensen, Nancy Daubenberger, Rylee Hince, Daniel Katzenberger, Katrina Kessler, Mehmet Konar-Steenburg, Paul Nelson, Sarah Strommen, Matt Varilek

Members excused: Grace Arnold, Peter Bakken, Brooke Cunningham, Kenneth Foster, Nicholas Martin, Thom Petersen, Gerald Van Amburg, Charles Zelle

Proxies present: Louise Miltich (for Arnold), Stephan Roos (for Petersen), Sue Vento (for Zelle)

EQB staff present: Catherine Neuschler, Erik Dahl, Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, Hazel Houle, Jesse Krzenski, Kayla Walsh, Denise Wilson

Other staff present: Karen Gaides (Minnesota Management and Budget)

#### 2. Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from May 17, 2023, Environmental Quality Board meeting
- Proposed agenda for June 21, 2023, Environmental Quality Board meeting

**Motion:** Board Member Strommen moved the consent agenda; Board Member Kessler seconded. Motion carries with a unanimous vote.

#### 3. Executive Director's report

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

- Trying Teams webinar for this hybrid meeting instead of Webex.
- Pollinator Awareness week – June 19-25
- Events

- ED Neuschler will be attending the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED) energy transition communities summit on June 26; there was legislative support for these communities and EQB staff want to be sure it's known that staff are here to help as they plan for any environmental review. EQB staff are working with DEED to further develop that plan for support.
- EQB is invited to southeast Minnesota by the Winona County Clean Water Coalition in early July.
- Work plans
  - FY2023 wrapping up
  - Information to be presented soon on FY2024 EQB work plan
- EQB Monitor Special Issue – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MEPA
  - Thanks to EQB board members for participating
  - More information at the Environmental Review Implementation Subcommittee (ERIS) meeting in July.
- Staffing updates
  - Returned from leave: Erik Dahl, EQB – Planning Director, Special Projects
  - Retiring end of June: Denise Wilson, EQB – Director, Environmental Review Program

**Motion:** Member Konar-Steenberg motioned to appreciate and acknowledge Denise Wilson's service to the EQB. Member Bauerkemper seconded. Motion carries with a unanimous vote.

#### 4. Continuous improvement tool finalization

**Presenters:** Kayla Walsh – Environmental Review Program Administrator, EQB; Karen Gaides – Management Consultant, Minnesota Management and Budget

**Type of item:** Decision

**Summary:** The board heard an update regarding the Environmental Review Program continuous improvement effort, including a ranked list of improvements. The board reviewed the continuous improvement process steps and voted on whether to use them moving forward.

**Discussion:**

- How would somebody unfamiliar with environmental review select the appropriate answer on the engagement HQ form? It could be an optional response or an unknown category.
- Cost and efficiency: hopefully if EQB has an efficient process in meeting all of the criteria, it will be cost effective. Resources include cost.
- ERIS to assist EQB in figuring out which projects are priority and make sure EQB has the capacity. Possibly EQB can complete some of the easiest projects that are not in the top 8. Possibly first phases could be completed for some projects and subsequent phases later.

**Next steps:** MAD's final report is due on June 30. EQB staff plan for improvements to be presented to ERIS in July. The interagency CI team will review improvements and planning for any major flaws prior to ERIS. ERIS will review, edit, and approve the plan and present the recommendations to the EQB in August. The EQB will review ERIS's recommendations and reach consensus for the next biennium. Every four years EQB would look at the 6 steps.

**Outcome:** Decision on a resolution to use the CI process steps to continue in evaluating the improvements EQB has received.

**Motion:** Board Member Kessler moved to approve the resolution; Board Member Hince seconded. Motion carries with a unanimous vote.

## 5. Follow-up to May 17 board meeting public comments

**Presenter:** Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

**Type of item:** Informational

**Summary:** Additional information regarding the process taken by the city of Duluth in responding to a citizen petition for an EAW that resulted in the concerns raised by the public commenters. EQB staff are not recommending any action on the specific project in Duluth, but the questions raised point to larger issues that could be considered in conjunction with continuous improvement.

**Discussion:**

- Did EQB get any guidance on what the EQB should do if an RGU acts and then later the RGU acts differently? The guidance was that the expiration of the timeline does not mean that the relevant authority can no longer act; they retain authority.
- Is there a role that EQB could play to support a transparent, consistent environmental review process? We have considered adding to the new EQB Monitor submittal service to require certification and/or acknowledge authorization.
- Administrative law – final agency action. It should be possible to make a determination as to when a particular pronouncement by government agency is an interim pronouncement vs. final. What do we mean by final agency action in this particular context – environmental review?
- Who has final authority – the planning committee or the city council?
- This makes a good case study for continuous improvements.

**Outcome:** The Board understands the concerns raised and the actions that the petitioners wanted the Board to undertake; connects those concerns to ideas for programmatic improvement raised in the continuous improvement discussions; and may provide input for the development of the staff's workplan for environmental review improvements.

## 6. Environmental congress

**Presenter:** Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

**Type of item:** Informational

**Summary:** The board heard an update on the planning for a 2023 Environmental Congress, possibly to be held in late fall. Due to multiple changes in EQB staffing, reconsidering EQB capacity. EQB staff have developed a preliminary concept for how the congress could be done this year. The 2019 Congress was a full day, in person in Mankato. The plan this year is to hold a half-day program in four Minnesota locations, including one metro location, held in person as well as virtually, with a commissioner, a public member, and EQB staff hosting at each location. Main topic areas: climate action and look back/look forward.

**Discussion:**

- EQB could possibly hold a full day congress in 2024 instead of a half day congress in the fall, or maybe something virtual this year and bigger next year.
- How much expectation is there externally for this to happen this year?
- Satellite locations seems like a good approach, and half a day could be manageable and seems reasonable.

**Next steps:** Convene planning/steering committees if needed, identify funding sources, identify regional locations and the topic or issue to be discussed at each one, set the “host team” for each location – Board members and staff, identify speakers for each location, develop plans for communications and engagement and refine the topic ideas, but if it seems EQB staff needs more time, the congress can be postponed until 2024.

## 7. Administrative Item – Approval of ED Authority to sign AGO agreement

**Presenter:** Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

**Type of Item:** Decision

**Summary:** The EQB enters into a biennial agreement with the Attorney General’s office to provide legal services; the FY24/25 agreement needs signature.

**Outcome:** The Board is requested to provide the Executive Director the authority to enter into an agreement with the Attorney General’s office for the AGO to provide legal services.

**Motion:** Board Member Kessler moved to approve the Executive Director’s authority to enter into the AGO agreement; Board Member Strommen seconded. Motion carries with a unanimous vote.

## 8. Public comment

Amelia Vohs, attorney at the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy: thanked Denise Wilson for her public service and her incredible work at EQB.

## 9. Closing and adjournment

Board Member Strommen motioned to adjourn. Board Member Kessler seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned.

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# July 2023 Environmental Review Implementation Subcommittee meeting

Wednesday, July 19, 2023 | 1:00-4:00 p.m. | 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155, Conference Room 100 and via Teams.

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## Minutes

### 1. Welcome and roll call

Chair Sarah Strommen called to order the meeting of the Environmental Review Implementation Subcommittee.

Members present: Grace Arnold, Joseph Bauerkemper, Nancy Daubenberger, Rylee Hince, Katrina Kessler, Paul Nelson, Sarah Strommen

EQB staff present: Catherine Neuschler, Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, Hazel Houle, Jesse Krzenski, Kayla Walsh

### 2. Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from October 19, 2022, Environmental Review Implementation Subcommittee meeting
- Proposed agenda for July 19, 2023, Environmental Review Implementation Subcommittee

Member Nelson noted that Items 4 and 6 in the draft October meeting minutes contain sentences stating that ERIS will take action in certain areas, whereas ERIS did take action at the meeting, so the verbiage should be changed to the past tense.

Chair Strommen and the subcommittee members agreed to the minutes update suggested by Member Nelson.

**Motion:** Member Daubenberger moved the consent agenda; Member Arnold seconded. Motion carries with a unanimous vote.

### 3. Executive Director's report

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

- Environmental Review planning director position is posted and closes July 31.

### 4. Potential Environmental Review FY24 Workplan

**Presenters:** Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB; Kayla Walsh – Environmental Review Program Administrator, EQB

**Type of item:** Recommendation

**Summary:** The subcommittee heard an overview of the environmental review program's workplan for state fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024). Staff discussed resources and capacity; reviewed larger proposed projects in more detail; and identified how certain projects support improvements recommended from the continuous improvement process.

The 8 improvements have turned into 13 projects. EQB needs to balance staff capacity with the projects.

**Public comment:**

Juventino Meza, Lawyer representing Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL): Stressed urgency for the decisions EQB is considering. In particular, lifecycle emissions analysis with projects to include emissions outside of Minnesota.

Andy Pearson, Minnesota 350: Lifecycle analysis in regards to pipeline issues – need a mandatory category based on greenhouse gas emissions ready for the next Mandatory Categories Report. Consider assigning more staff from agencies to the Environmental Quality Board as an interim to boost that capacity, so that we can reach not only phase one on the first implementation suggestion, but also phase two as quickly as possible. The expert panel should be prioritized for inclusion in the staff time.

Willis Mattison, ecologist: Request that the work plan be revised to make clear that reforms to NEPA and MEPA are needed and make the implementation of them immediate rather than long term.

Noelle Cirisan, political manager for Minnesota 350: We need lifecycle analysis on greenhouse gas emissions to happen much more quickly than the EQB staff recommendations outlined.

Joy Anderson, attorney at the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCA): If the decision criteria project does become the project that the EQB moves forward with, which would be a major change in how environmental review is implemented, MCEA would strongly move to make sure that ease of application is not the main point of these changes. We need to ensure that the criteria for decision making are aimed at what the statute says to determine whether the project has the potential for significant environmental effects. It seems to us that the criteria are probably not doing as well at that as they can, considering that almost no EIS are ever ordered from an EAW. The second project, training for RGU's, is a good idea and is urgent.

Akilah Sanders-Reed: Implores the represented agencies to leverage their staff capacity to help provide resources to the EQB, to move the goals around lifetime and life cycle review updates more expediently than the current timeline, and to boldly embrace the groundwork that has already been done.

Claire Olson: Strongly supports lifecycle analysis, and hopes that EQB staff can get the support they need to move quickly on implementation.

Sara Wolff, CURE: See attached comment, received by email during the meeting.

**Discussion:**

ERIS is interested in hearing more about lifecycle analysis; staff indicated they have been discussing how it could be integrated into the greenhouse gas emission calculation project. ERIS members want to continue to hear about that projects to support climate information in EAWs.

ERIS also suggested that the full Board hear more about the state's overall climate work in order to put EQB's work, especially in environmental review, in context.

ERIS asked for the work plan, when presented to the Board to include the FTE that are required to do the work, along with a timeline.

**Outcome:** ERIS agreed to make a recommendation to the full Board on the environmental review program related components of the FY24 EQB staff workplan as follows:

1. Do not remove any items that are currently in the staff recommendation from consideration by the board.
2. Add the FTE resources that are needed to complete the proposed items on the work plan and crosswalk the items on the work plan with opportunities for continuous improvement items, generally, and then specifically to incorporate the greenhouse gas life cycle analysis to understand how much of that work here encompassing opportunities within those items for board development and board learning.
3. Identify stopping points or decision points within work plan items, so that the full EQB could create phases if necessary.
4. Recommend to the board that they consider some balance between the project work items and attention placed to strategic planning work.

**Motion:** Member Nelson moved to approve the recommendations; Member Daubenberger seconded. Motion carries with a unanimous vote.

**Next steps:** Present the ERIS recommendation to the EQB in August.

## 5. Environmental Review Projects (Odyssey) Database

**Presenter:** Jesse Krzenski – Environmental Review Program Administrator, EQB

**Type of item:** Informational

**Summary:** An overview of the new Environmental Review Projects Database. The database will provide access to information on all environmental review projects published in the *EQB Monitor*. Any information provided about a project as a part of publication requirements will be stored in the database along with all required documents including all project related documents and decision documents. The database stores this information by each specific project and creates a project page to house all documents submitted through the process which can then be downloaded to view. The search functionality allows users to search for projects by specific areas or mandatory categories. The database began storing project information when the *EQB Monitor* submittal service was updated in May and will house all environmental review project information going forward from that launch date.

Jesse gave a demonstration of the database. The database can be found at the Environmental Review Projects Database [webpage](#).

**Discussion:**

Account users are responsible for uploading the project content to the database. The database is public facing so anybody can see the data and download the documents.

Possibly data could be included in the future regarding which projects have actually been completed in order to evaluate potential cumulative impacts.

## 6. Public comment

There were no comments during this item.

## 7. Closing and adjournment

Member Daubenberger motioned to adjourn. Member Bauerkemper seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned.

## Memo

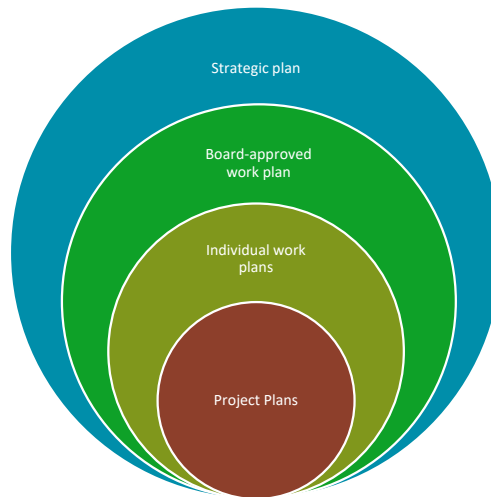
**Date:** August 4, 2023

**To:** Environmental Quality Board Members

**From:** Catherine Neuschler, Executive Director

### RE: Fiscal year 2024 EQB staff work plan and updating strategic plan

The EQB has generally used the work planning model shown below, which goes from the high-level guidance of the strategic plan, to the organizational work plan, to individual staff work plans, to the detailed levels of specific project plans that present goals, deliverables, and timelines.<sup>1</sup>



*Figure 1. Workplanning model*

### Memo attachments

This memo presents information and a proposed approach to two levels of this model – proposing a fiscal year (FY) 2024 work plan for Board approval and putting forth a process to revise the strategic plan for the next five-year period (2024 to 2029). The workplan includes projects that emerged as priorities through the continuous improvement process for environmental review as recommended by staff and considered by the Environmental Review Implementation Subcommittee (ERIS).

The memo provides information for these agenda items and includes the following attachments.

Attachment 1: Proposed FY24 EQB organizational workplan

Attachment 2: Timeline for proposed workplan

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<sup>1</sup> This workplanning model may show fewer layers than in the past – this version places more focus on upfront planning (including project plans) and less on how we review progress over the year, which happens through regular check-ins with staff and review of individual work plans and project plans.

Attachment 3: Draft resolution adopting proposed organizational workplan

Attachment 4: One page summary of current EQB strategic plan

Attachment 5: Full version of current EQB strategic plan

Attachment 6: Project charter for strategic plan update

## **FY24 workplan**

EQB staff have been working on developing our FY2024 work plan for the organization, covering the work we will do between now and June 30, 2024. This work plan – which we are presenting for Board approval – lays out our main projects and expected deliverables for the fiscal year.

The workplan (see attachment 1) is grouped into overarching programs – environmental review; climate policy and coordination; water and the water plan; pollinators; emerald ash borer; emerging issues; tribal engagement; engagement and youth activities; and board operations and administrative work. Within each program area, specific projects that we propose to work on next year are listed along with deliverables; tasks, timelines, and key decision points; estimated FTEs for EQB; and interagency support needs.

We also included a visual timeline to identify when major projects are likely to be involving EQB staff work, cross-agency review or work needs, and when decision points are likely to be reached.

The plan focuses on projects; since many projects, especially in environmental review, have multiple phases the workplan aims to scope the projects very specifically to the work contemplated for FY24. The workplan generally does not include day-to-day work or administrative tasks.

## **Workplan highlights**

The complete workplan and a timeline is provided in Attachment 1. This section of the memo discusses resources and provides some highlights.

### **Environmental review**

The environmental review program consists of four full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. These are the planning director (currently vacant), two program administrators, and the new temporary position for climate emission estimation (not yet filled). The new communications and engagement coordinator will likely provide significant support for some projects, and the executive aide plays a key role in production of the EQB Monitor.

The day-to-day work of the program was described in the memo to ERIS from July 2023. This work takes about 1.2 FTE. The remaining FTE are available for project work. A significant amount of EQB's project work in environmental review also relies on interagency resources – tech reps and environmental review staff. In constructing the timeline and workplan we have tried to be clear about the type of interagency support needed and whether that is just simple review of materials, requests for input, or actual work production. Most projects will need review and input.

In keeping with the new continuous improvement (CI) process, ERIS met in July to discuss EQB staff's project recommendations on the CI components of the FY24 EQB staff workplan. Staff recommended and planned for the implementation of two project ideas designed specifically to respond to improvement ideas: 1) Decision Criteria Evaluation and 2) Updated Guidance, Best Management Practices, and Trainings.

After discussion and hearing public comment, ERIS agreed that both project ideas could move to the Board. ERIS made the following recommendation to the Board:

1. Do not remove any items that are currently in the staff recommendation from consideration by the Board.
2. Add the FTE resources that are needed to complete the proposed items on the work plan.

3. Crosswalk the items on the work plan with identified opportunities for improvement, generally, and then specifically to incorporate the greenhouse gas life cycle analysis.
4. Identify stopping points or decision points within work plan items.
5. Consider some balance between the project work items and attention placed to strategic planning work.

### ***Mandatory categories report***

This is a priority project to meet the legislative requirement to conduct an evaluation of the environmental review mandatory categories and complete a report every three years. Although the next report is not due until December 2024, work will need to be done in FY24 to support a robust report.

As noted in June, all improvement suggestions related to mandatory categories will be evaluated as part of this report. To complete the necessary evaluation requested by the improvement suggestions, the staff believe that a more in-depth mandatory categories report will be needed. This will likely include a more science-based review of whether the category, including the thresholds, is meeting its intended outcomes. Additional public engagement is also planned.

The proposed plan is to spend the first part of FY24 reviewing past reports, developing a proposed report structure and components, and getting feedback on the proposed structure. After that, staff would develop a project schedule. Report drafting would begin in early 2024. In terms of interagency coordination, the legislative charge also references MPCA, DNR, and MnDOT. These agencies generally contribute significantly to the report by examining the mandatory categories that they implement as RGUs.

### ***Greenhouse gas emissions calculator and guidance***

This is a priority project that received legislative funding. In the 2023 legislative session, the EQB received funding for standardizing climate data in environmental review through developing a Minnesota-specific greenhouse gas (GHG) emission calculator/assessment tool and producing source and sector specific emission guidance. This work will involve hiring a staff person, completing a contracting process, overseeing a contractor's workplan and deliverables, and coordinating a workgroup to provide input on the tools developed. The staff involved in this work will also take on responsibility for maintaining and updating guidance on how to answer the climate questions in the environmental assessment worksheet form.

In this project, there will be a significant need to draw on cross-agency expertise and collaborate with all agencies that are working on greenhouse gas emissions accounting or tracking to make sure that we are using methods and processes that align. We envision that individual agency tech reps may identify climate experts or subject matter experts at their individual agencies (depending on which mandatory category or source sector the tool must address) to periodically assist in the development of this tool and provide feedback. Agencies will be identified after the project is contracted and properly scoped based on the contractor's abilities.

### ***Data Management Plan revision***

The data management plan revision is a medium priority. This is a staff-initiated project that supports program effectiveness and likely represents a fairly simple way to address certain suggested improvements from the continuous improvement process. The project will be done primarily by EQB staff, with review and input from agency Tech Reps and local RGUs.

### ***Decision criteria evaluation***

Re-assessing the decision criteria used in the environmental review process will be fundamental to modernizing the program in a way that reflects current science and understanding of the ways in which projects may impact environmental resources. The end result(s) of this project could include improving guidance and criteria for RGU decisions on whether significant environmental effects are predictable from a proposed project or revising the rules to establish threshold criteria for significance of impact. This will help answer questions like "what level of greenhouse gas emissions should require an EIS?" and address several improvement ideas.

While EQB staff are envisioning a long-range effort on the decision criteria, the work will be phased. Taking into account the discussion of resources and capacity at the June ERIS meeting, the workplan has been adjusted to clarify the work we are committing to undertake this year. For this year, the work is a medium priority, behind our legislative mandated and funded projects.

For FY24, the focus is on fully evaluating the needs for more information, clarity, or changes to decision criteria. The proposed deliverables for the year are to:

- Conduct an analysis of implementation by reviewing past environmental review submittals;
- Conduct an engagement process to gather input on what practitioners need for better and more consistent programmatic implementation of the decision criteria (guidance, rule updates, etc.);
- Provide a summary and overview of identified needs and how they can be addressed; and
- Develop a preliminary plan for next steps (including resources needed).

Towards the end of FY24 or early in FY25, the Board would be presented with this information along with a recommendation for how to address the identified needs based on the information available and gathered in the engagement process.

In depth review of the decision criteria provides the opportunity to evaluate and consider the need for and mechanism to include climate science, life cycle analysis, and cumulative impacts – many ideas which were stressed in the CI process.

### ***Guidance updates and training***

This is a staff suggested medium level priority that also provides significant opportunity to implement improvement ideas originating from the first round of the continuous improvement process. In July, ‘updates to guidance documents’ and ‘developing training’ were presented to ERIS as multiple different projects; for clarity, this memo presents guidance updates and training as a single project with multiple phases.

The staff have identified the need to update EQB’s existing Environmental Review program guidance narratives, format, and webpages. The goal of this project is to provide clearer guidance on environmental review, as well as make the guidance more accessible for all the ways people currently find and review information online. In FY23, a contractor provided initial background research and some identification of essential program needs. Staff plan to review this work and move forward with identifying what updates are needed.

In addition to updating existing guidance, there is a clearly identified need to extend the program guidance into new areas. Suggestions have included guidance or best practices for the petition process and providing notifications and conducting public engagement; how to make notices accessible; explaining the prohibition on issuing permits during environmental review; and similar items. The goal for FY24 is to add one to three guidance documents on priority needs, which should be a relatively simple way to address some of the suggested programmatic improvements.

Based on feedback received during the continuous improvement process, staff also believe that a more active training or cohort learning process could also be a good tool for improving program effectiveness and consistent implementation. In FY24, staff will begin to identify priority needs for training and scope a future program; consideration may be given to the need to ask for more resources to implement a larger training program.

### ***Climate Action Framework and climate policy***

Implementing the Climate Action Framework is a critical ongoing effort across state agencies. EQB is a member of the climate subcabinet and will be working to support Climate Action Framework implementation and reporting efforts. EQB expects to dedicate about 0.6 FTE to climate and engagement work (outside of environmental review) across three staff people.



## **Energy and Environment Report**

EQB will be working with relevant agencies to update the state's Environment and Energy Report Card, with a goal of putting out an updated report in early 2024. This is a high priority to keep updated. A key need is to evaluate the past metrics and goals and update them to account for recent legislative actions and changes to the state's goals around climate. Reporting agencies are being asked to review their past metrics and provide data and information for updates.

## **Climate Action Framework implementation**

Another potential area of work is identifying actions that EQB could undertake to support Minnesota's state agencies in reaching the goals laid out in the Climate Action Framework, including 100% carbon free electricity. Minnesota needs to develop and site infrastructure to move towards these large goals, while recognizing, evaluating, and mitigating the potential for site-based impacts on the environment and natural and cultural resources. While some specific ideas for EQB work have been discussed, more collaboration is needed to refine the goal, scope, and priority, at which point the Board will hear more about the work envisioned and the expected resource needs.

## **Water Plan**

EQB expects to dedicate approximately 0.5 FTE to work and coordination around the state water plan and related water issues. This will include, as it has in the past, ongoing updates and progress reports on the goals, strategies, and actions outlined in the state water plan. We anticipate two to three focused progress reports to the Board over the course of the year.

In the 2023 legislative session, funding and direction was given to the University of Minnesota to use their Water Council to develop a scope of work, timeline, and budget for a plan to promote and protect clean water in Minnesota for the next 50 years. EQB plans to coordinate with this group and help ensure that the 50-year clean water plan aligns with the state water plan and supports all the work the state agencies are already undertaking on clean water.

## **Pollinators**

Work on pollinator protection is high priority work to implement an Executive Order. EQB designates 0.65 FTE to the pollinator work and draws on resources from the Interagency Pollinator Protection Team. In early FY24, the team will be wrapping up the new pollinator action framework along with the annual pollinator progress report. The Board will hear a report on these items in September. After the pollinator action framework is complete, work will begin on the pollinator action implementation plan. The implementation plan is expected to be complete by June 2024.

## **Emerging issues**

The main emerging issues work for FY24 is the continued work on genetically engineered organisms and developing a framework for implementing this program as needed. This work is important; we will work to maintain momentum and move forward while recognizing potential capacity constraints on both EQB staff and our interagency partners. A small amount of time will also be spent to implement a new legislative requirement to publish notification of fish kills in the EQB monitor. EQB is supporting other agencies in that work, and it is a high priority due to the legislative requirements.

## **Engagement**

EQB's FY24 workplan contains two areas of work around engagement – Tribal engagement and general engagement and youth activities.

For Tribal engagement, a key FY24 work item is to develop a specific Tribal Coordination and Consultation Policy for EQB's work. This high-priority work is already in progress. We also hope to work with Tribes to specifically identify the areas of environmental review program improvement(s) that are most important to them, so that we can incorporate this work into the environmental review program workplan.

A key high priority item for general engagement is to do significant planning and preparation to host an Environmental Congress in 2024. Although EQB staff were originally planning to conduct an Environmental Congress in late 2023, resource constraints have led us to push this back to 2024. Another goal in this area for our new communications and engagement coordinator is to reinvigorate our youth engagement/emerging environmental leaders program.

### **Administrative**

The overall workplan generally does not include the details of daily management and administration – including budgeting, staff management, basic communications (website updates), the process of preparing and running board meetings, and similar items. However, for FY24 there are a couple of larger defined projects on the work plan. These include:

- Website migration – The EQB website needs to move platforms, and staff are working with MN IT staff to ensure that happens smoothly.
- Board by-laws – The statutes and rules that created the Board and define its authorities and operations have limited reference to the staff and the various authorities that can be exercised by the Chair on her own, be delegated by the Chair, or that are handled by the executive director. In FY24, I recommend we establish some basic by-laws to clearly establish those roles and responsibilities.
- Strategic Plan – An update to the EQB Strategic Plan is needed and is discussed in the remainder of this memo.

These projects have limited interagency needs, though we likely will need to work with agency tech reps to ensure they are able to find and access all documents after the website migration, and we do hope to get input from them on the strategic plan update as well.

### **Strategic Plan update**

The current EQB strategic plan was approved by the Board in September 2018 and was designed to last five years. The stated purpose of the plan is to “establish a directional framework that guides action and decision-making for the coming five years.” In the resolution adopting the strategic plan, the EQB affirmed a commitment to regularly adopt a strategic plan on a five-year cycle. There is a new statewide One Minnesota Plan, which we should ensure the EQB plan aligns with and supports. Therefore, it is time to begin the process of reviewing and updating the strategic plan.

### **Current strategic plan**

The current strategic plan contains a purpose, guiding principles, mission, priority results, and potential strategies that could be undertaken to accomplish the priority results. (A two-page summary of the strategic plan is provided as Attachment 3, with a fuller version of the strategic plan as Attachment 4.)

The current strategic plan specifically states that it is not highly detailed in order to promote flexibility, and “is intended to be aspirational, provide broad guidance, and serve as a shared reference point for the EQB, agency partners, and Minnesotans”. The plan also notes that EQB will report on implementation and develop a reporting protocol to measure progress in three key areas.

## Purpose and goals of strategic plans

There are many reasons to craft a strategic plan, and different approaches to what the goal and purpose of an organization's strategic plan should be. One source says, "Strategic plans are a roadmap for how an organization wants to direct its resources to achieve a defined vision."<sup>2</sup>

Another source provides the following definitions for strategy, strategizing, and strategic planning:

- **Strategy:** "Strategy is what links capabilities and aspirations."
- **Strategizing:** "Strategizing consists of the activities undertaken by public organizations or other entities to deliberately and emergently (re)align their aspirations and capabilities, thus exploring how aspirations can actually be achieved within a given context."
- **Strategic planning:** "Strategic planning is a reasonably deliberate and deliberative approach to strategizing"; it often includes:
  - Analyzing mandates; evaluating and updating mission, values, vision
  - Analyzing the operating environment to identify strategic issues
  - Formulating concrete and implementable strategies to address the identified issues<sup>3</sup>

In addition, strategic plans are usually grounded in an organization's mission, vision, and values. A vision statement lays out a shared image of the future, and a mission describes how the organization will work to achieve that vision. Values describe how an organization is or wants to work and show up in the world.

## Needs for new strategic plan

For an organization like the EQB, which has a very large potential area in which to operate and a very small staff, a key purpose of the strategic plan should be to support the clear alignment of resources with organizational goals. Although having flexibility and being able to react to changes can be beneficial, the lack of specificity required to promote flexibility can also lead to a lack of clear direction about resource deployment.

Our aspirations and ideas at EQB are big; there are a lot of things that we could take on that would fit within the priority results and potential strategies of the current strategic plan. That also limits our ability to use the strategic plan to make prioritization decisions when our capacity does not stretch to accommodate everything we want to do.

My goal for the new strategic plan is that it clearly expresses our particular role; identifies outcomes that we want to achieve; and sets forth a small number of priority strategies that we believe will support and lead to the identified outcomes. Annual organizational workplans can then focus our capacity on projects and work that fit within the priority strategies. We can meet these needs with a moderate revision that maintains and builds on much of what we already have.

Vision – The current EQB strategic plan does not specifically identify a vision. It does articulate a shared environmental goal: "healthy and sustainable environmental quality that supports public health, economic vitality, societal quality of life, and sustained natural resources." This seems like a vision statement that all of our agencies working on environmental issues can support; it is suggested that we maintain this (or substantially similar) language and specifically identify it as the vision.

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<sup>2</sup> Sawtell, K. (2022, April 1) What is Strategic Planning in Government? <https://www.velosimo.com/blog/what-is-strategic-planning-in-government>

<sup>3</sup> Bryson, J. and George, B. (2020) Strategic Management in Public Administration. In Peters, B. G. and Thynne, I. (Eds.) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Public Administration*. Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.139

Values – The current strategic plan also does not call out values; instead, it sets forth guiding principles. Those guiding principles are:

- **Leadership and action** that prioritizes Minnesota’s environmental quality, public health, safety, and welfare;
- **Trust** between the board, public, decision makers, project proposers, and partner organizations;
- **Collaboration** with partner agencies, outside groups, and the public;
- **Respect** for public values, state law, and agency rules;
- **Evidence-based planning**, that implements current science in policy development and decision making;
- **Innovation** that fosters creative solutions in policy and program decisions; and
- **Equity** for all Minnesotans’ environmental, economic, and social wellbeing

It is suggested that we keep these as EQB values, parallel to but separate from the strategic plan.

Mission – As currently described in the EQB’s strategic plan, the organizational mission “is to enhance Minnesota’s environmental quality for current and future generations by leading interagency work to advance meaningful public engagement and facilitate informed decision-making on critical environmental issues.”

Beyond the mission statement, there is a lot of language about what we do that is similar but expresses things slightly differently. Other language includes:

- “The EQB’s unique contribution to this goal is the ability to bring multiple state agencies and the public together to advance interdisciplinary discussions”
- “Forum for leadership and coordination across Minnesota state agencies on priority environmental issues that are interdisciplinary and cross-jurisdictional”

A mission statement should define and describe an organization’s specific and unique purpose – what it does and the outcomes it is striving for.<sup>4</sup> Someone reading the mission statement really should be able to identify the organization, and not confuse it with another. As part of revising our strategic plan, I suggest we review our mission statement and make sure it meets our needs and describes the unique role EQB plays in Minnesota’s environmental governance.

Priority results or desired outcomes – A key component of updating the strategic plan will involve reviewing the issues that we want to address and the outcomes we want to produce. This review is planned to start from our current six priority results:

1. The EQB fosters innovative POLICY DEVELOPMENT that balances Minnesotans’ environmental quality, public health, economic vitality, equity, societal quality of life, and sustained natural resources.
2. The EQB provides leadership on priority EMERGING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.
3. The EQB’s ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW process is transparent, accountable, efficient, and creates and sustains a healthy environment and strong economy for Minnesota.
4. Minnesotans are ENGAGED in policy dialogue and diverse perspectives are considered in policy development.
5. The EQB is a trusted partner with state agencies in the COLLABORATIVE WORK of enhancing Minnesota’s long-term environmental quality.
6. The EQB provides SUPPORT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS on environmental review and the implementation of environmental policies and programs.

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<sup>4</sup> This concept is expressed in Priya Parker’s The Art of Gathering.

We will review which of these we want to keep, leave, or change. For instance, with the work that we did to define environmental review effectiveness, we likely want to consider how to incorporate those definitions in our desired outcomes for environmental review. In addition, we might consider whether to include a specific outcome related to climate change.

Strategies – Finally, a key piece of the work will be to identify and articulate strategies that will help us move towards our desired outcomes. The current strategic plan identifies four to seven *potential* strategies under each priority result, and the strategies are not included in the high-level summary of the strategic plan. In order to most effectively utilize our capacity, and to allow us to make intentional choices about the work will prioritize, the new strategic plan should include these more specific approaches to reaching our desired outcomes.

There will be many possible actions we could undertake to help reach the desired outcomes; having two to three specific actions in each outcome will ensure we focus. These should be strategies that we think we are well-equipped to undertake and which, with focus, can drive us towards the desired outcome. Then annual workplans can be built to accomplish these strategies specific areas of work to make sure that we're putting our capacity to what we need to do.

Implementation/Metrics – When the existing strategic plan was developed, there was a statement that the staff would report on implementation and “develop a reporting protocol that integrates qualitative and quantitative data to measure progress in the following three areas:

1. Engagement of Minnesotans in EQB policy discussion and development.
2. Effectiveness of the Minnesota Environmental Review program in identifying and communicating potential environmental effects and engaging the public in the review process.
3. Effectiveness of collaborative policy development on priority and emerging environmental issues.”

Clear measures for the strategic plan do not seem to have been developed. These measures are also not clearly linked to specific priority results or potential strategies. With more specific strategies, measures will be easier to develop.

In revising the strategic plan, we also should work intentionally to ensure that it is aligned across all levels, so that it is clear how the mission and vision flow into the outcomes, and strategies. The implementation and metrics need to clearly match the desired outcomes.

### **Process for new strategic plan**

EQB staff have secured help from MPCA’s organizational improvement unit; two staff from that group that have experience working on continuous improvement and planning and will design and facilitate our discussions. A key question we will be asking is “*what can we leverage from the existing EQB Strategic Plan to guide our decision-making and actions for the next five-year planning cycle?*”

The project plan includes a focus on two major areas:

1. Mission and Priority Results Review
2. Determine Strategies to Align with Priority Result

It is envisioned the Board will engage in two major facilitated exercises around these topics. Attachment 5 to this memo is a proposed project plan and charter for the process of completing the strategic plan.

Project	FY24 Deliverable(s)	FY24 Tasks, Decision Points and Timelines	ER Program Improvements Addressed	EQB FTEs	Cross-Agency Needs
<b>Environmental Review</b>					
Improving ER Data Collection	Revised ER Data Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Review current data management plan; review selection of environmental review documents (1 - 2 months)</li> <li>* Recommend components of new data management plan - available data, areas of need, opportunities to improve data (4 months)</li> <li>* Get input from RGUs on new plans for data collection (1 to 2 months)</li> <li>* Draft Revised ER Data Management Plan (1 month)</li> <li>* Present to Board (1 month)</li> <li>* Final Revised ER Data Management Plan</li> </ul>	Evaluates the potential to improve the EQB data management/gathering plan in order to support better annual reporting about the impact of environmental review, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Improve annual public reporting on the accumulative impact of all approved projects, including impacts on water and projected GHG emissions.</li> <li>* Gathering information about the final course of action chosen (including mitigation measures); how review documents were used (including reasons for rejection and selection of alternatives); and how the decision complies withMEPA's policy goals.</li> </ul>	0.25 FTE (Jesse)	Tech Reps + RGU Review
2024 Mandatory Categories Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Project and engagement plan</li> <li>* Draft report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Review past reports and identify desired report structure and components get feedback from state agency RGUs in the last quarter of CY2023</li> <li>* Develop project schedule and engagement plan</li> <li>* Review existing categories and document evaluation for report in first half of CY2024; includes workgroup feedback and work by implementing RGUs; includes engagement</li> <li>* Draft report in August 2024; conduct engagement on draft report</li> <li>* Final report due December 2024</li> </ul>	All comments related to mandatory categories, thresholds, and potential for new categories	0.3 FTE (ER Team)	Tech Reps from RGUs: Work product needed
ER Guidance and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Updated existing ER guidance documents - content and format (accessibility, web formatting)</li> <li>* Add 1 to 3 new guidance documents on priority needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Review FY 23 work (background research, stakeholder engagement, identification of essential program guidance needs)</li> <li>* Identify needed updates to existing guidance documents</li> <li>* Identify priority needs for new guidance documents</li> <li>* Develop identified guidance narratives, formats (including accessibility) and design guidance webpages</li> <li>* Identify priority needs for training</li> <li>* Scope potential RGU training and develop requests for resources</li> </ul>	The EQB should continually identify, document, and disseminate define best practices through its website; trainings or workshops for RGUs, project proposers, and consultants; and supporting documents.	0.25 FTE (ER Team)	Tech Reps + RGU Review
Evaluate Decision Criteria needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Conduct engagement process to gather input on needs for decision criteria (guidance, rule updates, etc.)</li> <li>* Summary and overview of identified needs and how they can be addressed</li> <li>* Preliminary plan for implementation /next steps of identified needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Develop plan for framing the issue via RGU, partner, stakeholder, and public input</li> <li>* Identify RGU, partner, stakeholder needs and wants for improved implementation of decision criteria</li> <li>* Draft a white paper/concept plan that defines the problems, needs, and scope and tools (guidance, rulemaking, other) for the potential improvements</li> </ul>	EQB reviews and revises the decision criteria in the statutes and rules. EQB addresses the following improvement ideas (some overlap with GHGs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Establish threshold criteria for significance of impact - Improved guidance and criteria for RGU decisions on whether significant environmental effects are predictable from a proposed project.</li> <li>* Provide clarity that RGUs should evaluate thesignificance of greenhouse gas emissions in the context</li> </ul>	0.5 FTE (ER Team + Comms/Engagement Coordinator)	Project-based workgroup drawn from Tech Reps + RGUs
Master Contract	Updated Environmental Review Master Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* July - September 2023 - Ensure current master is extended for one year</li> <li>* September 2023 to March 2024 - Work with MMB to develop new master contract</li> <li>* March 2024 to Summer 2024 - Review contractors for inclusion</li> <li>* Have new master contract in place August 2024</li> </ul>		0.1 FTE (Jesse)	Info sharing to Tech Reps
Energy transition communities	Assist with with regulatory coordination and technical assistance. Specifics TBD in conjunction with DEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Discuss energy transition community needs and identify EQB support - Summer 2023</li> <li>Likely to include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop interagency technical team for coordination</li> <li>- Provide dedicated technical assistance and training focused on AUAR</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Could help improve EQB's capacity to provide technical assistance	TBD	DEED
Interagency Connection and Collaboration	Liaison to Minnesota Business First Stop, any other interagency needs	As determined by those groups		0.1 FTE (Kayla)	DEED
Biannual ER Improvement Process Implementation	Regular engagement with partners, stakeholders and the public to solicit, evaluate, and report back on ideas for program improvement	No action in FY2024. Early 2025 - Gather additional improvements from external parties Mid 2025 - Score new improvement and update prioritized list of improvements Mid 2025 - Add any identified improvement projects to EQB workplan		0.1 FTE (Kayla)	Tech Reps
Obsolete Rules Report	Obsolete Rules Report	Final report due December 1, 2023		0.1 FTE (Kayla)	Info sharing to Tech Reps
Technical assistance	Provide regular, ongoing technical assistance to RGUs, the public, project proposers, etc. that meets statutory timelines.	Process petitions, publish notices, answer questions, etc.		0.55 FTE (ER Team)	N/A
Outreach and Engagement	Maintain connection with environmental review partners (state/local/tribal governments) and stakeholders.	Provide environmental review information to partners and stakeholders through ongoing relationships, events, etc.		0.2 FTE (ER Team)	N/A
EQB Monitor Production	EQB Monitor online submittal service is used by all RGUs.	Provide ongoing guidance and support for RGUs using the new system to submit notices.	Online submittal service supports better data gathering and ideas to improve reporting.		N/A
ER Project Database	ER Project Database provides easily accessible project information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Communicate about availability and capabilities of the database</li> <li>* Ongoing maintenance and propagation of database</li> <li>* Work to migrate historical projects into the database</li> </ul>	Online database supports better data gathering and ideas to improve reporting.	0.35 FTE (Jesse, Hazel)	N/A
<b>Climate in Environmental Review</b>					
GHG Emission Calculator	Minnesota-specific GHG Calculator Tool	RFP - Fall 2023 Work begin - Q2 2024 Final Deliverables - June 30, 2025	Opportunity to include or support life cycle analysis of GHG emissions will be considered (scope dependent on resources).	1.2 FTE (Kayla + New Climate FTE)	Climate Workgroup (new)
Sector and Source-Specific Climate Information guidance	Sector based calculator(s) and guidance	Develop project plan - Summer/Fall 2023 Final Deliverables - June 30, 2025	Opportunity to include or support life cycle analysis of GHG emissions will be considered.		

Project	Deliverable(s)	FY24 Tasks, Decision Points and Timelines	EQB FTEs	Cross-Agency Needs
<b>Climate Framework/Policy/Coordination and Energy</b>				
Climate Action Framework Reporting	Participate in goal teams Provide venue(s) for reporting	As determined by Climate Action teams and subcabinet	0.25 FTE (Catherine, Erik, Comms/Engagement Coordinator)	Climate agencies
Climate Action Framework Implementation	* Participate in climate subcabinet * Support climate strategy development * Identify projects and actions for EQB to support implementation of projects that support climate goals	* Connect to relevant agencies. * Work with state agencies to identify areas of work, gaps, needs, and opportunities * Develop outcomes and scope of projects for EQB.	0.25 FTE (Catherine, Erik)	Climate agencies
Environment and Energy Report Card	Environment and Energy Report Card	* Work with agencies to review the metrics as to whether the "finish line" is still right; whether the goal is still important; whether the metrics still speak to the goal * Identify a few metrics that need updating, while retaining those that are important to demonstrate long-term trends * Complete updated report by January 31, 2024	0.1 FTE (Erik)	Project-based workgroup
<b>Water and Water Plan</b>				
Water Plan Progress Reports	Regular progress updates to the Board on the goals, strategies, and actions outlined in the Water Plan.	Develop plan for two or three focused progress reports given over the course of the year Coordinate presenters for the progress reports	0.1 FTE (Erik)	Water plan agencies
Water Plan Implementation	Identify the goals, strategies, and actions where EQB can be most effective in moving implementation forward.	* Review past work and collaboration * Identify ways in which EQB can support collaboration and engagement around state actions in the water plan * Work with state agencies to identify areas of ongoing work, gaps, needs, and opportunities * Make recommendations for future projects	0.1 FTE (Erik)	Likely collaboration with MDA and MDH
50-Year Water Plan	Provide coordination between state agencies that contribute to the State Water Plan and the U of M group that was directed by the legislature to complete a 50-year water plan.	* Begin meeting with state agencies in August 2023. * Meet with U of M team. * Identify needs and how EQB can effectively support efficient coordination prior to scope of work being submitted in December 2023.	0.2 FTE (Catherine, Erik)	MPCA, DNR, MDH, MDA
Solar panels on DWSMAs	Participate as member of steering team, as projects meet multiple statewide goals. Identify if there are barriers EQB could help remove.	Bi-monthly steering team meetings through early 2024.	0.05 FTE (Catherine)	N/A
<b>Pollinators</b>				
Pollinator Action Framework	Pollinator Action Framework	Complete pollinator action framework (included in annual pollinator progress report) by September 2023.	0.65 FTE (Rebeca)	IPPT Team Members
Pollinator Action Implementation Plan	Pollinator Action Implementation Plan	Complete pollinator action implementation plan by June 2024.		
Annual Pollinator Report	Lead development of and present annual pollinator progress report	Complete annual pollinator progress report by September 2023 and September 2024.		
<b>Emerald Ash Borer</b>				
Convene EAB Workgroup	Continue to convene group for discussions	No specific needs identified.	0.05 FTE (Rebeca)	EAB Team Members

Project	Deliverable(s)	FY24 Tasks, Decision Points and Timelines	EQB FTEs	Cross-Agency Needs
<b>Emerging Issues</b>				
Genetically Engineered Organism Program Research and Development	Framework and process for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Ongoing coordination/connection with key agencies around potential projects, needs, and process development</li> <li>* EQB staff to develop framework and process for potential implementation</li> <li>* Key interagency staff review framework</li> <li>* Develop recommendation for next steps for Board consideration</li> </ul>	0.2 FTE (Rebeca)	Tech Reps
Fish Kill Notifications	Process for publishing fish kill notifications in EQB Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Work with other agencies (MPCA) to meet new legislative requirements for publishing fish kill notifications in the EQB Monitor</li> <li>* Begin publishing fish kill notifications 8/1/2023</li> <li>* Work with other agencies (MPCA) to meet new legislative requirements for publishing fish kill investigative reports in the EQB Monitor beginning in FY25</li> </ul>	0.05 FTE (Jesse)	EQB supporting MPCA, DNR, MDA
<b>Tribal Engagement</b>				
Tribal Coordination and Consultation Policy	EQB Specific Tribal Coordination and Consultation Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Develop initial draft of Tribal coordination and consultation policy</li> <li>* Share draft policy with Tribal nations and connect for discussion</li> <li>* Revise policy to incorporate Tribal nation feedback</li> <li>* Internal and agency Tribal liasion review</li> <li>* Complete final policy for Board approval by end of 2023</li> </ul>	0.15 FTE (Kayla, Catherine)	Review by tribal liasions
ER Improvement Process Implementation	List of environmental review improvements that are important to Tribal nations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Meet with MNTEC to review, refine, and prioritize improvements</li> </ul>		N/A
<b>Engagement and Youth Activities</b>				
Environmental Congress	Plan for 2024 Environmental Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Develop intended outcomes and scope</li> <li>* Develop agenda and speakers</li> <li>* Develop communications and engagement plan</li> <li>* Develop logistics and invites</li> </ul>	0.3 FTE (Comms/Engagement Coordinator)	MPCA support for climate; other agencies TBD
EQB Website Redesign	Develop a plan	TBD	0.1 FTE (Comms/Engagement Coordinator)	N/A
Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC)	Participate in IDEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Participate in IDEC cohort summer training by sharing information about EQB's work</li> <li>* Identify available funding and potential projects to determine if EQB can host a student worker in Summer 2024</li> </ul>	0.1 FTE (Catherine, ER Team)	N/A
Emerging Environmental Leaders	Revised EELs/Youth Engagement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Review past program purpose, goals, and outcomes</li> <li>* Connect with past partners and identify other potential partners</li> <li>* Revise/update youth program for long-term sustainability</li> </ul>	0.1 FTE (Comms/Engagement Coordinator)	N/A
<b>Board Operation and Administrative</b>				
Update EQB strategic plan	Revised EQB Strategic Plan	See project plan and charter; goal is to be complete by April 2024	0.2 FTE (Catherine)	N/A
Website migration	EQB website updated to Drupal 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Review materials on current website and identify those that need to migrate</li> <li>* MNIT to move EQB website from Drupal 7 to Drupal 9 by end of October 2023</li> </ul>	0.2 FTE (Comms/Engagement Coordinator, Hazel)	N/A
Board By-Laws	Craft board by-laws to better identify roles and responsibilities	Draft and get attorney review	0.1 FTE (Catherine)	AGO
Board Member Handbook	Review board member handbook and make updates as needed	Complete by August 2023	0.25 FTE (Hazel)	N/A
Procedures "Cheat Sheet"	Develop simplified document for ED, Chair, Staff on key board procedures	Complete by Fall 2023		N/A
Board "Tracker"	Develop tool to track Board decisions for easier future reference	Complete by Fall 2023		N/A



# Draft Environmental Review Workplan

EQB FY24

KEY:

= EQB Work  
 = All RGUs  
 = Mandatory Categories Workgroup  
 = Only Tech Reps  
 = Guidance Workgroup  
 M = Meeting

					August, 2023	Sept, 2023	Oct, 2023	Nov, 2023	Dec, 2023	Jan, 2024	Feb, 2024	March, 2024	April, 2024	May, 2024	June, 2024
PROJECT	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IDEA	ASSIGNED TO	NEW FTEs	PROGRESS											
<b>Mandatory Categories Report</b>	<b>Cumulative impacts; Life cycle</b>		0												
Outline, engagement, white papers on specific categories, draft and re-draft report, publish	High Priority	EQB		0%											
Review existing categories and thresholds for scientific integrity, make recommendations	High Priority	RGUs and Mandatory Categories Work group		0%					M	M	M	M	M	M	M
<b>Data Management Plan</b>	<b>Annual reporting; findings statements</b>		0												
Determine data sources and draft plan	Medium Priority	EQB		0%											
Provide data, review draft plan	Medium Priority	Tech Reps		0%											
<b>Decision Criteria Evaluation</b>	<b>Cumulative impacts; Life cycle</b>		0												
Convene experts, scope changes, perform research	Medium Priority	EQB		0%											
Partners verify assumptions, provide scientific backing, make recommendations	Medium Priority	RGUs and Tech Reps		0%				M						M	
<b>Guidance: existing, new BMPs, trainings</b>	<b>Strengthen capacity for EQB oversight</b>		1												
Provide new BMPs, maintain existing guidance, build a trainig program for RGUs	Medium Priority	EQB		0%											
Provide feedback, information for scoping, identify gaps, provide edits, pilot training	Medium Priority	Guidance workgroup		0%				M		M				M	
<b>Master Contract</b>			0												
Draft new contract with Department of Administration	High Priority	EQB		0%											
Reviews and promotes	High Priority	Tech Reps		0%				M						M	
<b>CI Process Run Through</b>			0												
Solicit new ideas, initiate CI process steps	Low Priority	EQB		0%											
Promote engagement HQ, validate high ranking ideas that emerge through the matrix	Low Priority	Tech Reps		0%											
<b>Obsolete Rules Report</b>			0												
Draft report	Medium Priority	EQB		0%											

Decision point: EQB determines if a legislative request is needed to pursue rulemaking.



Decision point: EQB determines if a legislative request is needed to carry out a training program.



					August, 2023	Sept, 2023	Oct, 2023	Nov, 2023	Dec, 2023	Jan, 2024	Feb, 2024	March, 2024	April, 2024	May, 2024	June, 2024
PROJECT	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IDEA	ASSIGNED TO	NEW FTEs	PROGRESS											
Review drafts and provide feedback	Medium Priority	Tech Reps		0%		M									
<b>Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculator and Guidance</b>	<b>Life cycle</b>		1												
Contract for tool creation, hire 1 FTE, update guidance on how to answer the climate questions in the EAW	High Priority	EQB		0%											
Provides input on needs/capabilities	High Priority	RGUs		0%											M
<b>GEO Work</b>			1												
Convene working group, map out work flow	Medium Priority	EQB		0%											
Provide input on process mapping	Medium Priority	Tech Reps		0%	M	M	M		M		M				
<b>Other CI identified Processes</b>															
Neutral body of experts with ability to provide quality checks over ER documents	Pool of experts; Life cycle; capacity for oversight	EQB	2 modelers; 5 subject matter experts												
Ombudsperson	"Have a 'go-between'"	EQB	1 ombuds												
<b>Other EQB Initiatives</b>															
<b>Strategic Plan</b>															
Review past plans, present needed changes to Board, gather input on mission and priority results from partners, draft mission, outcomes, and strategies, finalize and implement		EQB													
Provide input and direction, review drafts		Tech Reps									M				
<b>Environment and Energy Report Card</b>															
Draft report, circulate to agencies, refine and publish		EQB													
<b>Pollinator Work</b>															
Pollinator Annual Report and Action Framework Development		EQB													
Pollinator Action Framework Implementation Plan		EQB													



## RESOLUTION OF THE MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

### Approval of the Fiscal Year 2024 Organizational work plan

*The mission of the Environmental Quality Board (EQB or Board) is to enhance Minnesota’s environmental quality for current and future generations by leading interagency work to advance meaningful public engagement and facilitate informed decision-making on critical environmental issues.*

EQB adopts the attached Fiscal Year 2024 Organizational Work Plan (Work Plan), which aligns with EQB’s mission, strategic plan, budget, and authorities. The Work Plan identifies key projects (organized by area of work); FY24 deliverables; FY24 tasks, decision points and timelines; and identifies both EQB staffing needs and cross-agency collaboration needs. The Executive Director will give periodic updates on the work plan and discuss any significant changes with the Board.

Selected relevant authorities:

- Minnesota Statutes 116C and 116D provide the authority to implement the EQB Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Organizational Work Plan.
- Minnesota Statutes 116C and 116D and Rules 4410.0300 and 4410.0400 provide EQB the authority to oversee the Environmental Review program and make updates.
- Executive Order 19-28 directs EQB work related to pollinator health.
- Executive Order 19-37 establishes EQB membership in the Climate Change Subcabinet and directs related duties.

**The board resolves that** the EQB Executive Director implement the Fiscal Year 2024 Organizational Work Plan, and manage EQB staff and budget resources accordingly, including executing any contracts needed to perform the work indicated.

The board approved and adopted this resolution on August 16, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nancy Daubenberger, Chair  
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments: Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 EQB Organizational Workplan

# Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

## 5-year strategic plan

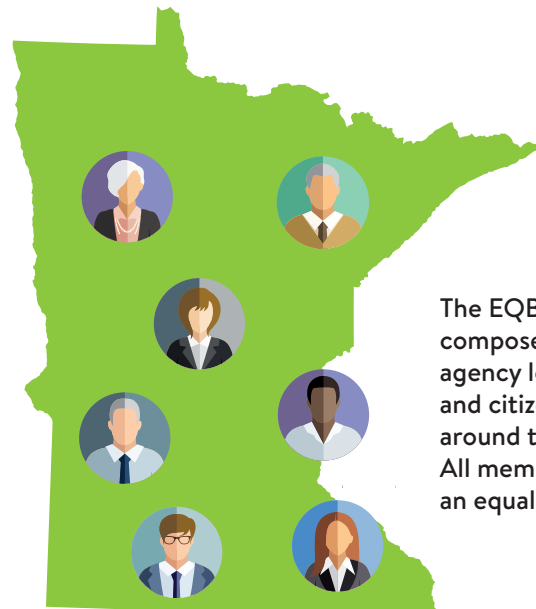


### What is the EQB?

The Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) is a forum for leadership and coordination across Minnesota state agencies on complex, priority environmental issues. As a public-facing board, the EQB strives to engage Minnesotans and provide greater access to conversations regarding the future of our environment.



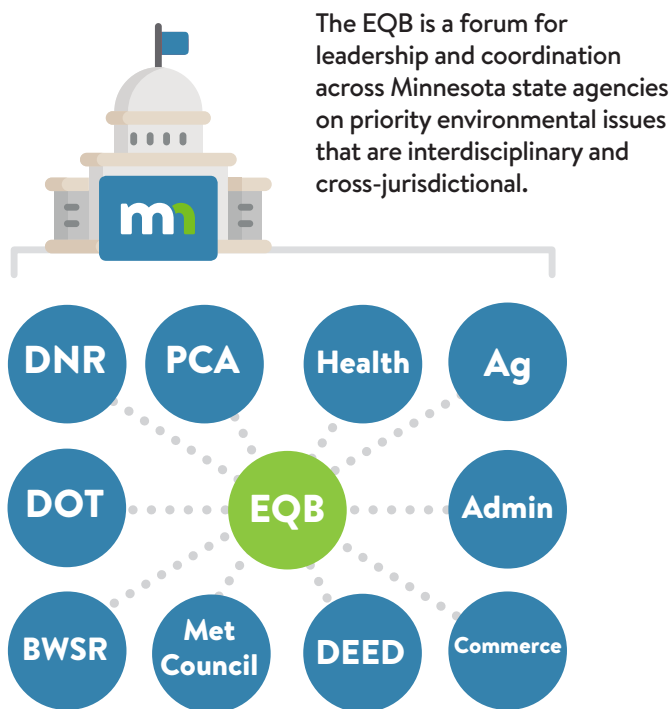
The board has a responsibility to address issues affecting our water, land, air, energy, and climate. In addition, the EQB functions as the coordinating body for Minnesota's **Environmental Review Program**.



The EQB is composed of state agency leaders and citizens from around the state. All members have an equal vote.

In carrying out its role, the EQB joins with individual Minnesotans, communities, and public and private organizations in working towards our shared environmental goal: **healthy and sustainable environmental quality that supports public health, economic vitality, societal quality of life, and sustained natural resources**. The EQB's unique contribution to this goal is the ability to bring multiple state agencies and the public together to advance interdisciplinary discussions.

**The EQB's mission** is to enhance Minnesota's environmental quality for current and future generations by leading interagency work to advance meaningful public engagement and facilitate informed decision-making on critical environmental issues.

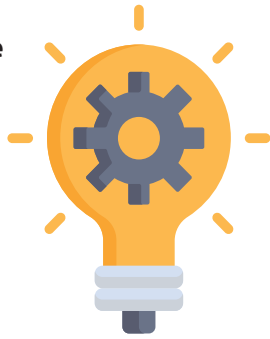


# EQB's 5-year strategic plan

**Purpose:** To provide a broad framework to guide the board's action and decision-making for the next 5 years. The plan identifies 6 priority results and possible strategies to achieve them, but is flexible enough to accommodate emerging issues and shifting priorities.

## Where we're headed

- 1.** The EQB fosters **innovative policy development** that balances Minnesotans' environmental quality, public health, economic vitality, equity, societal quality of life, and sustained natural resources.



- 2.** The EQB provides leadership on priority **emerging environmental issues**, by identifying emerging issues, convening conversations, and deliberating policy issues.



- 3.** The EQB's **environmental review** process is transparent, accountable, efficient, and creates/sustains a healthy environment and strong economy for Minnesota.



- 4.** Minnesotans are engaged in policy conversations and **diverse/underrepresented groups are actively included** and considered in policy development.



- 5.** The EQB is a **trusted partner with state agencies** in the collaborative work of enhancing Minnesota's long-term environmental quality.



- 6.** The EQB provides **support to local governments** on environmental review and the implementation of environmental policies and programs.



**Contact**



## MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

### FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Adopted September 19, 2018

#### Overview:

The 1973 Legislature established the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB/Board) as a forum for leadership and coordination across Minnesota state agencies on priority environmental issues that are interdisciplinary and cross-jurisdictional. As a public-facing board, the EQB strives to engage Minnesotans and provide greater access to conversations regarding the future of our environment.

*Minnesota Statutes*, section 116C.04 gives the Board the responsibility to investigate interagency environmental issues. The law identifies a range of environmental matters for investigation, including but not limited to air, water, solid waste management, transportation and utility corridors, energy policy, and planning. In addition, the EQB functions as the coordinating body for Minnesota's Environmental Review Program.

In carrying out its role, the EQB joins with individual Minnesotans, communities, and public and private organizations in working toward our shared environmental goal: healthy and sustainable environmental quality that supports public health, economic vitality, societal quality of life, and sustained natural resources. The EQB's unique contribution to this goal is the ability to bring multiple agencies and the public together in an effort to advance interdisciplinary discussions on complex environmental issues. In recent years, issues such as silica sand mining, climate change, pollinator protection, and water quality improvement have all benefited from the unique platform that the EQB provides.

#### Plan Purpose:

The purpose of this strategic plan is to establish a directional framework that guides action and organizational decision-making for the coming five years. This plan honors our shared environmental goal and articulates the EQB's unique role in contributing to that goal. Specifically, it reaffirms the organization's mission, identifies six key desired results of EQB efforts, and identifies possible strategies to achieve those results.

By design, this plan is not highly detailed or prescriptive—it is intended to be aspirational, provide broad guidance, and serve as a shared reference point for the EQB, agency partners, and Minnesotans. It outlines the core elements of future priorities, while preserving the flexibility and responsiveness that have been essential to the EQB's past success. As a living document, the plan will guide board and staff activities while simultaneously accommodating emerging issues and dynamic state needs.

This plan is informed and shaped by the following guiding principles:

- **Leadership and action** that prioritizes Minnesota’s environmental quality, public health, safety, and welfare;
- **Trust** between the board, public, decision makers, project proposers, and partner organizations;
- **Collaboration** with partner agencies, outside groups, and the public;
- **Respect** for public values, state law, and agency rules;
- **Evidence-based planning**, that implements current science in policy development and decision making;
- **Innovation** that fosters creative solutions in policy and program decisions; and
- **Equity** for all Minnesotans’ environmental, economic, and social wellbeing.

## **MISSION**

Enhance Minnesota’s environmental quality for current and future generations by leading interagency work to advance meaningful public engagement and facilitate informed decision-making on critical environmental issues.

## **RESULTS**

**The EQB has named six priority RESULTS that the organization aspires to achieve in the coming five-year period.** To achieve these results, the EQB will employ strategies that best position the organization for success. Throughout implementation, the EQB will prioritize and adapt these strategies for each result.

**1. The EQB fosters innovative POLICY DEVELOPMENT that balances Minnesotans’ environmental quality, public health, economic vitality, equity, societal quality of life, and sustained natural resources.** The EQB provides a platform for public voice in policy development. The EQB provides a forum for collaborative cross-sector policy development. The EQB offers leadership in aligning policies across agencies. The EQB leads with equity in its policy development. Potential strategies include:

- Align state agency policy priorities to enhance statewide outcomes.
- Facilitate an interdisciplinary understanding of the environmental, economic, social, and health impacts of policy.
- Facilitate better connections between executive and legislative branches of government.
- Provide avenues for the public to meaningfully contribute to policy discussions and policy development.

**2. The EQB provides leadership on priority EMERGING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.** The EQB identifies emerging environmental issues, convenes conversations, and deliberates policy issues. The EQB is a leader on water, land, air, energy, and climate. The EQB recognizes Minnesota's role in supporting environmental quality and environmental justice as part of the regional, national, and global community. Potential strategies include:

- Discussing the latest research and scientific advances related to emerging environmental issues at the EQB's Board Meetings.
- Collaborate with research institutions, organizations, and businesses to identify key emerging issues.
- Initiate and support interagency projects to address emerging issues.
- Provide opportunities for individuals, organizations, and businesses to bring emerging issues to the Board.
- Proactively collaborate with businesses showing leadership in sustainability and environmental improvement.
- Actively solicit broad input on emerging issues of concern to Minnesotans, including environmental justice issues and climate change.
- Analyze and deliberate local, regional, national, and global trends, policies, and best practices in environmental protection and improvement.

**3. The EQB's ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW process is transparent, accountable, efficient, and creates and sustains a healthy environment and strong economy for Minnesota.** The public, proposers, and local and state government organizations are clear about implementation requirements. Potential strategies include:

- Systematically monitor Environmental Review Program indicators to ensure compliance with the objectives of MEPA.
- Take a continuous improvement approach with program management decisions based on relevant data. Considers the needs of local and state governments, citizens, and project proposers.
- Create guidance and information about the Environmental Review Program for the public to support meaningful participation in the review process.
- Provide high quality assistance to stakeholders that supports effective and efficient implementation of Environmental Review requirements.
- Provide stakeholders meaningful information about the status of specific environmental review projects and easy access to governmental decision-makers.
- Ensure the Minnesota environmental review rules are current and result in meeting the needs for effective state and local environmental decision-making.



**4. Minnesotans are ENGAGED in policy dialogue and diverse perspectives are considered in policy development.** Underrepresented groups are actively included in EQB policy dialogues and development. Minnesotans know about the EQB's role in policy development and environmental review processes and understand their options for participation. Potential strategies include:

- Provide and clearly communicate opportunities for the public to influence environmental policy, programs, and outcomes.
- Build meaningful relationships with diverse groups statewide.
- Proactively include underrepresented groups and environmental justice communities in policy dialogues and development.
- Develop communications strategies to engage diverse stakeholders.
- Enhance citizen Board Member roles as representatives of citizen perspectives and concerns.
- Provide information to the public to inform and drive public discussion.
- Provide high quality customer service when responding to questions from the public.

**5. The EQB is a trusted partner with state agencies in the COLLABORATIVE WORK of enhancing Minnesota's long-term environmental quality.** Partner agencies and the EQB work together in addressing multijurisdictional environmental challenges. The EQB provides transparent and meaningful interagency coordination so that policy and programs are aligned and optimized for public health and environmental protection. Potential strategies include:

- Articulate statewide narratives, plans, research, and shared goals.
- Intentionally align state-level environmental programs to achieve better consistency, resulting in improved environmental outcomes.
- Convene and support interagency and intergovernmental teams to address priority statewide issues.
- Support collective efforts to advance goals of individual member agencies.

**6. The EQB provides SUPPORT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS on environmental review and the implementation of environmental policies and programs.** The EQB is a valued source of information and resource network for local governments seeking assistance. The EQB achieves statewide environmental goals by fostering connections with local governments and community efforts. Potential strategies include:

- Provide technical assistance and access to interagency subject matter expertise.
- Support and partner with local environmental initiatives.
- Highlight innovative best practices at the local level.
- Identify and elevate local concerns for statewide consideration.
- Convene workgroups to share best practices, identify barriers, and develop innovative solutions.

**KEY INDICATORS**

In 2019-2020, the EQB will report on strategic plan implementation and develop a reporting protocol that integrates qualitative and quantitative data to measure progress in the following three areas:

- 1) Engagement of Minnesotans in EQB policy discussion and development.
- 2) Effectiveness of the Minnesota Environmental Review program in identifying and communicating potential environmental effects and engaging the public in the review process.
- 3) Effectiveness of collaborative policy development on priority and emerging environmental issues.

# Project Charter

## EQB Strategic Plan Refresh

Document Owner(s)	Project/Organization Role
Catherine Neuschler	Executive Director, Project Sponsor
Kim Behrens, Kari Canterero	Organization Improvement Unit, Project Team

### Purpose

This project charter defines the scope, objectives, and overall approach for the proposed project. It is a critical element for initiating and executing the project. In addition, it serves as a contract between the Project Team and the Project Sponsors, stating what will be delivered according to the time constraints, resources, and standards agreed upon.

### Project Overview

#### Rationale/Justification

EQB’s current five-year strategic plan was developed in 2018; it was designed to provide a broad framework to guide the board’s action and decision-making for the period of the plan. The plan documentation states that it identifies six priority results and possible strategies to achieve them, but it is meant to be flexible to accommodate new issues and shifting priorities.

The strategic plan needs to be reviewed and revised as it is coming to the end of its lifespan. MPCA’s organizational improvement unit will provide help and support to the EQB Executive Director in updating the strategic plan, including facilitating input opportunities.

In developing the plan for moving forward, the question asked is *“What can we leverage from the existing EQB Strategic Plan to guide our decision-making and actions for the next five-year planning cycle?”*

The identified priorities need to be reviewed to ensure that they remain the priorities of the Board moving forward. More clarity needs to be added on the strategies to achieve the priorities, in order to support EQB’s ongoing work planning and deployment of resources to meet organizational goals. The plan also should be aligned with the new One Minnesota Plan.

The goal is to complete a moderate revision of the strategic plan to clearly define the components of the plan; ensure alignment between all components; ensure that the plan clearly expresses our particular role; identifies outcomes that we want to achieve; and sets forth a small number of priority strategies that we believe will support and lead to the identified outcomes. The strategic plan should be a useful tool to EQB staff in developing individual and organizational workplans towards accomplishing the desired outcomes.

### Project Summary

The project will begin with a review of the existing strategic plan, particularly its purpose, guiding principles, mission, priority results, and potential strategies that could be undertaken to accomplish the priority results. The Executive Director will walk the Board through the existing strategic plan and identify the need for changes.

As part of that walk through, the ED will identify:

- Purpose – That the purpose and use of the strategic plan is to clearly align organizational resources and capabilities to support the organization’s aspirations
- Vision – That the “shared environmental goal” in the current strategic plan (healthy and sustainable environmental quality that supports public health, economic vitality, societal quality of life, and sustained natural resources) is an appropriate vision and should be largely retained
- Values – That the “guiding principles” in the current strategic plan should be retained and considered EQB values
- Mission – That the organizational mission statement should be revised to represent EQB’s specific way of contributing to the environmental vision
- Priority Results/Outcomes – That the current priority results should be reviewed in order to determine if they remain the outcomes that EQB wants to achieve, and if any of them should be kept, removed, or revised
- Strategies – The need for significant work to specify strategies that will contribute to meeting the priority results
- Implementation/Metrics – Follow-up work to identify how to measure progress on the strategies

The Board will review this project charter, focusing on the deliverables and timelines on the next page, and provide direction to shape the strategic plan at the identified points. The Board’s main role will be to shape the content of the plan, rather than the structure. Some desired outcomes are:

- Participants (Board members, staff, and tech reps) have the opportunity to offer insights, thinking and ideas into specific areas relating to the Strategic Plan.
- OIU provides participatory processes and relevant activities to gather data in a short amount of time to inform specific areas of the plan

The ED, with help from OIU and staff, will do significant structuring and drafting of the plan.

### **Project Assumptions**

The assumption is that the purpose articulated by the ED is appropriate and that the general vision, values, and priority results remain relatively important. Therefore, the project is a moderate revision that maintains and builds on the existing strategic plan to meet the goals described above.

### **Project Risks/Constraints**

If the strategic plan needs a complete re-write, then more discussion, external engagement, and a longer process will be needed.

## Project Deliverables and Timelines

Deliverable	Steps	Dates	Staff
1. Staff discussion on changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and discuss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 10</li> </ul>	Catherine
2. Planning with OIU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with OIU team and review charter, scope, and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 18</li> </ul>	Catherine
3. Present needed changes and proposed plan to Board (memo and presentation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide overview of current strategic plan</li> <li>Identify desired changes and focus of strategic plan update process</li> <li>Present project plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board Meeting – August 16</li> </ul>	Catherine
4. Gather input on mission and priority results/outcomes from multiple groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EQB staff</li> <li>Internal state agency partners</li> <li>Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recap overview provided to Board in August</li> <li>OIU conduct facilitated exercise to gather input on the mission and outcomes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the “priority results” remain important to the Board</li> </ul> </li> <li>Report out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EQB Staff and Tech Rep Meeting – Oct/Nov</li> <li>Board Meeting – Oct or Nov</li> </ul>	OIU
5. Draft mission and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review information gathered from facilitated exercises and draft revision to mission and priority results/outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October to December</li> </ul>	Catherine OIU EQB Staff
6. Review mission and outcomes; gather input on strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review drafted mission and outcomes</li> <li>Facilitated exercise to gather input on strategies to fit each outcome               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the level of detail that we want included in the strategies</li> <li>Identify key strategies that should be carried forward and add any new strategies</li> <li>Determine how many strategies are needed for each goal – recognizing priorities and resources</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EQB Staff and Tech Rep Meeting – Nov/Dec</li> <li>Board Meeting – January</li> </ul>	OIU
7. Compile draft strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put together all components into strategic plan</li> <li>Review draft plan with interagency groups and Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EQB Staff Meeting – Jan</li> <li>Tech Rep Meeting – Feb</li> <li>Board Meeting – Feb or March</li> </ul>	Catherine OIU EQB Staff
8. Public Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release draft strategic plan for public engagement using Engagement HQ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March and April 2024</li> </ul>	Catherine EQB Staff
9. Finalize Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review public input and make changes</li> <li>Present final for Board approval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April or May Board meeting</li> </ul>	Catherine EQB Staff
10. Implementation – Workplan and metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect workplan for FY25 to strategic plan</li> <li>Design reporting metrics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer 2024</li> </ul>	Catherine EQB Staff

**From:** Becca Mulenburg

**Sent:** Thursday, June 22, 2023 12:49 PM

**To:** Wilson, Denise (EQB); Neuschler, Catherine (She/Her/Hers) (EQB); Krzenski, Jesse W (EQB)

**Subject:** !! Notice to Respond - time sensitive

**This message may be from an external email source.**

Do not select links or open attachments unless verified. Report all suspicious emails to Minnesota IT Services Security Operations Center.

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Dear EQB Board and Staff,

!! Important !! Time-sensitive materials requesting a response. Please see 2 attachments.

Regards,  
Becca Mulenburg

Becca Mulenburg  
1649 W Page St  
Duluth, MN 55811

June 22, 2023

Dear EQB Board and Staff,

Please distribute ASAP!

We have reviewed the June 21, 2023, Board Meeting Packet. Page 60 of the packet states: "However, the Duluth City Code also indicated that the Planning Commission is an advisory body for the Duluth City Council with respect to environmental review."

Our team understands the law, the interplay between state statutes, rules and local ordinances. We appreciate that city officials may have more credibility than members of the public generally, but that is not true in this case. The statement "However, the Duluth City Code also indicated that the Planning Commission is an advisory body for the Duluth City Council with respect to environmental review" is **FALSE**. That language does not appear anywhere in any chapter of the Duluth City Code! Since you published that statement, please provide evidence to its validity immediately.

The Planning Commission is advisory to the City Council on a number of planning and development related items. These are spelled out in detail in Chapter 50 of the Duluth City Code. However, nowhere in Chapter 50 contain the words "environmental review". That is because "environmental review" is handled by a completely different chapter of the Duluth City Code and there is no provision for an appeal to the City Council on Planning Commission decisions as the RGU established by this ordinance. See attached, emphasized. "Sec. 2-41. Powers and duties. In addition to the powers and duties granted to the planning commission by this Code, by the ordinances of the city of Duluth and by the laws of the state of Minnesota, the planning commission shall serve as the responsible governmental unit and conduct environmental reviews pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 116D and the applicable state regulations. (Ord. No. 9939, 10-13-2008, § 1.)"

If you cannot provide this evidence, or have found that publishing it was in error, we are requesting a statement explaining this error *immediately!* We cannot express enough the time-sensitivity of this matter. We are guessing the statement may have been provided to you by the City without any sort of fact-checking process, and you just ran with it. Is that a correct assumption?

The consequences of the EQB not acting on adequate statute or authority by rule to clarify an obviously errant local decision-making process forced citizens to appeal to the appellate courts, which we have done. We will be in front of City Council on Monday, June 26th, asking for a Stay of this erroneous decision. This matter is extremely urgent and might we remind you, precedent-setting. It could set the course for every Citizens' Petition for an EAW be overturned by a non-RGU body.

Regards,

Becca Mulenburg

*Representative for a Successful Citizens' Petition for an EAW as decided by the designated RGU, Planning Commission, in Duluth, MN on 4/11/2023.*

1649 W Page St

Duluth, MN 55811

**Sec. 2-41. Powers and duties.**

In addition to the powers and duties granted to the planning commission by this Code, by the ordinances of the city of Duluth and by the laws of the state of Minnesota, the planning commission shall serve as the responsible governmental unit and conduct environmental reviews pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 116D and the applicable state regulations. (Ord. No. 9939, 10-13-2008, § 1.)