

August 2024 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, August 21 from 1 – 4:00 p.m.

Join in person or online

- In person: [520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155](#), lower level conference rooms
 - Online: For the meeting link and more information, visit the [board meeting webpage](#)
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Participating in board meetings

Attending in person

The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) will convene its meeting in person at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency St. Paul office building. 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.

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.

Accessibility

Please contact Environmental Quality Board (EQB) staff at least one week prior to the event at 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 at multiple points in the agenda.

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 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

Note that all listed times are estimates and are advisory only.

1. Welcome and roll call (1:00 pm)

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

2. Approval of consent agenda (1:10 pm)

- Meeting minutes from the July 17, 2024, Environmental Quality Board meeting on packet page 5
- Preliminary agenda for the August 21, 2024, Environmental Quality Board meeting

3. Executive Director's report (1:15 pm)

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

4. Emerald Ash Borer – Agency and partner work update (1:20 pm)

Type of item: Informational

Summary: Emerald ash borer (EAB) is a small beetle native to eastern Asia. The larvae feeds on the structures that move nutrients up and down ash trees, killing the tree within one to three years of infestation. In the United States, EAB was first detected in Michigan in 2002, and since then it has spread to 36 states, including Minnesota. EAB poses a threat to the nearly one billion ash trees in Minnesota's forestland and urban landscapes. It is projected that nearly all ash species native to our state will be eradicated by EAB if no action is taken to protect them.

EQB convenes an interagency team to address EAB. The team has developed recommendations for action against EAB and is working to implement strategies to: slow the spread of EAB; support communities; transition ash forests; manage ash wood materials; and lead, engage, and collaborate around this issue. The memo included on packet page 9 highlights progress made to date and challenges state agencies are facing to address EAB.

The EAB interagency team and collaborators and partners will speak to the board about the challenges in address EAB, progress made, and further opportunities for action.

Outcome: The board is updated on the current status of actions against EAB in Minnesota and continues to support statewide efforts, and understands the further resources and support needed to continue to response to EAB.

Presenter:

Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno – State Pollinator Coordinator, EQB

Mark Abrahamson – Division Director and State Plant Regulatory Official, MDA

Valerie McClannahan – Cooperative Forest Management Assistant Supervisor, DNR

Tim Farnan – Planning and Assistance Supervisor, MPCA

Guest speakers:

Hannibal Hayes – City forester, City of Minnetonka

Karen Zumach – Director of Community Forestry, Tree Trust

Ken Smith – Senior Advisor, Ever-Green Energy

Break (2:30 pm / 5 minutes)

5. Office of Enterprise Sustainability Report (2:35 pm)

Type of item: Informational

Summary: Executive Order 19-27 directs Minnesota’s state government to “make efficient use of water and energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and ensure that goods and services procured by the government are sustainable”. The Office of Enterprise Sustainability is required to publish an annual report that is shared with the public and presented to the EQB. Sustainability metrics can be found at <https://sustainability.mn.gov/>.

Outcome: The Board is informed and the requirements of the EO are met.

Presenter: Marcus Grubbs – Director, Office of Enterprise Sustainability, Department of Admin

6. Environmental Congress update (3:00 pm)

Type of item: Informational

Summary: As we gear up for next month’s Environmental Congress, we will share more details on the agendas, intended outcomes, Board member roles, and timeline for announcements and registration.

Outcome: The Board is informed on plans and timeline for the 2024 Environmental Congress.

Presenter: Priscilla Villa-Watt – Communications and Engagement Coordinator, EQB

7. FY25 Workplan (3:15 pm)

Type of item: Decision

Summary: The Executive Director will present the proposed organizational workplan for FY25. A high-level discussion of the workplan is provided in the memo on page 40 and the full workplan is on page 45 of the packet.

Public comment: The board welcomes oral public comment on the FY25 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.

Presenter: Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

8. Public Comment (3:50 pm)

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

9. Closing and adjournment (4:00 pm)

July 2024 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, July 17, 2024 | 1:00-4:00 p.m. | 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155, lower level conference rooms and online via Teams.

Minutes

1. Welcome and roll call

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

Members present: Grace Arnold, Peter Bakken, Ed Brands, Brooke Cunningham, Nancy Daubenberger, Tamar Gronvall, Rylee Hince, Daniel Katzenberger, Katrina Kessler, Nicholas Martin, Paul Nelson, Thom Petersen, Sarah Strommen

Members excused: Joseph Bauerkemper, Todd Holman, Angie Smith, Matt Varilek, Charles Zelle

Proxies present: Myra Kunas (for Cunningham), Peder Kjeseth (for Petersen), Kevin McKinnon (for Varilek), Eric Wojchik (for Zelle)

EQB staff present: Catherine Neuschler, Stephanie Aho, Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, Colleen Hetzel, Hazel Houle, Jesse Krzenski, Sarah Lerohl, Kayla Walsh, Elizabeth Batsaikhan

The Chair welcomed Vice-Chair, Nick Martin, re-appointed as the public member for congressional district 4, Ed Brands as the new public member for congressional district 7, and Angie Smith as the new public member for congressional district 5.

Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from May 15, 2024, Environmental Quality Board meeting
- Proposed agenda for July 17, 2024, Environmental Quality Board meeting

Motion: Board Member Nelson moved the consent agenda; Board Member Katzenberger seconded. Motion carries with a unanimous vote.

2. Executive Director's report

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

- Social gathering – The August meeting is planned to be primarily in person with lunch for the Board members. In-person emphasis as well for the October meeting.
- Environmental Congress – Staff are continuing to work out and confirm the logistics for the Environmental Congress meetings that will be held across four early evenings the week of September 23. Each Board member should have the logistics information/a calendar hold for the event. A longer update will be presented at the August meeting.

3. GHG Calculator: High level overview and update

Presenter: Stephanie Aho – Greenhouse Gas Data Analyst, EQB

Type of item: Informational

Summary: EQB has hired a consultant, ICF, to develop a greenhouse gas emissions calculator tool that can be used by responsible governmental units to answer the climate-related questions in Minnesota's Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), focused on question 18. The board heard an update on the scoping and methodology phase of this project, including insight gathered from the technical advisory team, work done to group mandatory categories into manageable subgroups, and ongoing efforts to appropriately size the tool to the resources and data available.

Discussion:

- Could use some clarification in terms of terminology.
- It's important that the tool provide both the option of utility specific emission factors and also have the option of defaults.

Outcome: EQB staff will present again to the ERIS Subcommittee in September, speaking more technically about how the tool will be constructed.

4. Strategic Plan: Feedback overview and approval

Presenter: Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

Type of item: Decision

Summary: Since late 2023, the Board has undertaken a series of facilitated exercises to revise and update the existing EQB strategic plan for the next five years. In late May and early June, EQB staff conducted some public engagement on the plan. The strategic plan is drafted to cover July 2024 to June 2029.

Proposed changes:

- Outcome 1, Strategy 2 to read: "Regularly bring Minnesotans together to talk about environmental issues"
- Outcome 2, Strategy 3 to read: "Collaborate with the Climate Change Cabinet to support information sharing in reporting implementation progress around Minnesota's climate goals and actions"

- Outcome 3, Strategy 4 to read: “Evaluate and develop any needed updates to Minn. R. 4410 to support program effectiveness and clarity in implementation”
- Outcome 3, Strategy 1 to read: “Provide guidance and training to support responsible government units and project proposers in completing EAWs”

Public comment:

- Amelia Vohs, Climate Director from Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy: the EQB would be a great facilitator in having discussions around not just how are we doing on the Climate Action Framework, but how are we also doing on the Next Generation Climate Act.

Response to public comment:

- Outcome 2, Strategy 3 updated

Motion: Board Member Nelson moved to approve the Strategic Plan including the proposed changes. Board Member Katzenberger seconded.

In favor: Arnold, Brands, Cunningham, Daubenberger, Gronvall, Katzenberger, Kessler, Martin, Nelson, Strommen. Opposed: none. Excused: Bakken, Bauerkemper, Hince, Holman, Nelson, Petersen, Smith, Varilek

Outcome: The board resolves that the strategic plan will guide its work through June 2029.

5. Tribal policy vote

Presenter: Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

Type of item: Decision

Summary: : EQB seeks to facilitate positive government-to-government relations with all federally recognized Tribal Nations that share geography with the state of Minnesota. To support this, EQB staff drafted a Tribal coordination and consultation policy. The draft policy describes how EQB will engage with Tribal governments on issues under EQB’s specific authority.

This item is a continuation from an agenda item in April 2024, when the Board directed staff to bring this draft to the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) for further input and present again to the Board at a future meeting. Executive Director Neuschler, along with MnDOT tribal liaison Levi Brown, shared the policy and presented a summary at the MIAC executive session on May 22. Kayla Walsh, as tribal point of contact, also reached out to members of the Minnesota Tribal Environmental Committee (MNTEC). No additional comments or recommended changes were received.

Proposed changes:

- Change wording on page 18 to the newly adopted mission statement under the section “Roles and Responsibilities of the EQB”
- Addition of the words “and consider” to the bullet point “Listen to input” under the coordination section

Motion: Board Member Arnold moved to approve the Tribal policy including the proposed changes. Board Member Martin seconded.

In favor: Arnold, Brands, Cunningham, Daubenberger, Gronvall, Hince, Katzenberger, Kessler, Martin, Nelson, Strommen. Opposed: none. Excused: Bakken, Bauerkemper, Holman, Nelson, Petersen, Smith, Varilek

Outcome: The Board adopted the Tribal coordination and consultation policy.

6. Public comment

Amelia Vohs, Climate Director from Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy: It would help the public if the memorandum explains specifically what is meant by life cycle emissions. Also, there's research that's showing that biomass isn't carbon neutral, so it should perhaps be incorporated into the climate calculator.

7. Closing and adjournment

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

Memo

Date: August 9, 2024

To: Environmental Quality Board (EQB)

From: Emerald ash borer interagency team

RE: Update on the status of emerald ash borer in Minnesota

Background

Emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) (EAB) is a small iridescent green beetle native to eastern Asia. The larvae create S-shaped tunnels under the tree bark when feeding on the parts that move nutrients up and down the trunk, ultimately killing the trees within one to three years of infestation.

In the United States, EAB was first detected in Detroit, Michigan in 2002, and since then it has spread to 36 states, including Minnesota. Fifteen years have passed since EAB was first found in St Paul in 2009; as of June of 2024, EAB is found in 52 Minnesota counties.

EAB is a threat to Minnesota, since our state has the highest number of ash trees in the country. Minnesota has well over a billion ash trees in forestland and urban landscapes, which will be eradicated by EAB if no action is taken to protect them. Thus, this insect threatens not only our natural resources, but also our economy, way of life, and our resiliency against climate change.

In April of 2018, the EQB convened an interagency team to work on this issue in response to inquiries from the Ramsey/Washington Partnership on Waste and Energy regarding the decrease in ash tree disposal options in the Twin Cities metro. The interagency team included staff from the Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources (DNR), Agriculture (MDA), Health, Commerce, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and the Metropolitan Council.

The 2019 Minnesota Legislature approved \$1,000,000 in funding for communities to respond to EAB. In this same year, the EAB interagency team developed a report to provide recommendations for action on EAB to Minnesota's state agency leaders. The EQB approved the report in November of 2019, and directed the team to report back with specific recommendations to carry out the identified strategies. To develop these recommendations, the EAB interagency team brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from EAB-affected communities and industries. The stakeholders helped develop a set of recommended actions, including those that could be accomplished with current resources and actions that would need additional resources. The actions were arranged into the following work areas:

- **Slow the spread.** Detection and monitoring; biological control; limit human-facilitated movement of EAB; training, education, and outreach; workforce solutions; biodiversity.
- **Support communities.** Technical assistance, incentives and financial resources, emergency response.
- **Transition ash forests.** Planning, technical assistance, incentives and financial resources.
- **Manage ash wood materials.** Planning, incentives for wood markets, incentives for wood processing.
- **Lead, engage and collaborate.** EAB taskforce, expand research.

The EAB interagency team presented these recommendations to the board in spring of 2020.

Current efforts

Since 2020, staff from the lead agencies identified in the recommended actions document (MDA, DNR, Commerce, and MPCA) have continued to meet as the EAB interagency team. The EQB convenes the team regularly to update each other on progress toward recommendations, challenges they are facing, and to identify potential opportunities for interagency collaboration.

Tables 1 to 5 provide highlights of the state agencies' progress to date and the challenges they are facing against EAB. A detailed account on progress toward the recommendations made in 2020 is included in the Appendix.

Highlights of the progress and challenges toward implementation of recommendations against EAB

Report recommendation: Slow the spread

Table 1. Highlights of the process and challenges toward implementation of slow the spread

Agency	Progress	Challenges
MDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains a system to report, investigate and confirm EAB finds. • Ongoing biological control efforts. ENRTF support ended, but USDA in-kind assistance support continues. • Continued USDA-APHIS financial support for firewood outreach efforts. MDA applies for these funds annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAB-infested counties have increased exponentially, making it difficult to continue administering a quarantine. Current projections are for EAB to be detected in all 87 counties by 2030. • Federal support for firewood outreach efforts is not guaranteed long-term.
DNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Pest First Detector in partnership with the University of Minnesota (UMN) is an ongoing effort. • Provides ongoing training to natural resources managers and woodland owners on EAB. • Continued outreach on not moving firewood in Hunting Regulations and State Forest Maps. • As of April 2024, there were 949 Certified Tree Inspectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to increase the number of quality tree care professionals to meet the increased demand in tree treatments, removals, and plantings.

Report recommendation: Support communities

Table 2. Highlights the progress and challenges toward implementation of supporting communities

Agency	Progress	Challenges
MDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced a comprehensive manual for Minnesota communities "Guidelines to slow the growth and spread of emerald ash borer". • Ongoing technical assistance to communities regarding EAB surveillance and management strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for this work is not guaranteed from year to year. • There will be a growing need for technical assistance as more communities detect EAB.

Agency	Progress	Challenges
DNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UMN Extension updated the list of tree species that could be considered replacement species in our changing climate. • Since 2019, the Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) program has offered \$25,061,000 in state funding for community grants and has received over \$65,000,000 in requests. • Ongoing technical assistance to urban forest managers and city officials regarding ash health diagnosis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In fiscal year 2025, UCF funding will drop to \$400,000 annually and will primarily fund staffing. Communities need additional financial support.
MPCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To incentivize increased utilization of all wood waste, a \$1 million competitive grant RFP will be issued in the fall of 2024. • Convening a group of wood waste stakeholders (40-50 participants) to build connections, grow awareness of the wood waste issue, and increase utilization of wood waste. • Working with metro counties as they develop their wood waste management plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One million is insufficient to address the program in any material way. This will be a proof of concept and demonstration of need more than anything.

Report recommendation: Transition ash trees

Table 3. Highlights of the process and challenges toward implementation of transitional ash forests.

Agency	Progress	Challenges
MDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDA has been involved with the response to detections in northern Minnesota, including on Chippewa National Forest. 	
DNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A response plan for EAB infestation in northern Minnesota was completed. • Work from the Planning and Timber programs is ongoing. • Ash management has been incorporated into DNR plans. • An increased focus on ash is being offered as part of timber sales. This is part of the strategic forest management plan for DNR lands. • Cooperative forest management initiative in process. Silviculture program will provide content on forest management strategies around EAB. • Silviculture and nursery programs established stoolbeds of alternative species as a reforestation option on public and private lands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimizing EAB spread to adjacent stands is not possible at this point. • Resources needed to provide technical support for coordination of reforestation efforts, ash forest transition strategies, and best management options to public and private woodland owners. • Sites growing ash are more difficult to operate in that drier upland forest. Markets remain limited in many parts of the state.

Report recommendation: Manage ash wood materials

Table 4. Highlights of the progress and challenges towards implementation of managing ash wood materials

Agency	Progress	Challenges
MPCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing funding to District Energy and Koda Energy to incentivize the ongoing utilization of wood waste for energy production. Hired a full-time staff person to manage wood waste grants and develop further strategies and EAB recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future of woody biomass utilization for energy production is uncertain and hinges largely on the PUC's determination of woody biomass feedstocks as carbon free or partially carbon free. There is a lack of storage and processing capacity throughout the 7-county metro, and ongoing funding will be needed to build capacity and diversify utilization strategies and markets for this material. Open burning activities are becoming more prevalent in the metro area.
DNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale commercial biomass facilities and mills that will take ash are listed in DNR directory. Ongoing discussions with MPCA and other stakeholders regarding the potential use of increased ash wood material in the waste and energy industries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further financial investments will be necessary to make significant progress to explore alternative uses of ash wood waste in the waste and energy industries.
Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for Xcel Energy's power purchase agreement with St. Paul Cogeneration (see eDocket number 21-590). The plant is biomass-fired and provides heat and electricity for District Energy St. Paul. Support at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for evaluating carbon-free resources on a lifecycle basis (see eDocket number 23-151). Recommendation to the Commission to initiate a separate docket to define the requirements for sustainable and waste biomass. 	

Report recommendation: Lead, engage, collaborate

Table 5. Highlights of the process and challenges towards the implementation of leading, engaging, and collaborating.

Agency	Progress	Challenges
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAB interagency team convenes regularly and continue working to implement recommended actions against EAB and update strategies in light of new information and research. 	
DNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborates with the UMN to support EAB-related research. 	

Summary and Next Steps

Significant progress has been made to slow the spread of EAB in Minnesota, increase our monitoring efforts, and increase our capacity to work in public lands and with affected communities. However, this invasive insect will

continue to move deeper into our state. Resources are necessary to manage affected trees, transition ash forests, and increase awareness and education about this pest. Additionally, innovative solutions are crucial to deal with the volume of wood waste generated by EAB infestations and the potential climate impact that the loss of ash trees will cause in our state.

The EAB interagency team asks for the continued support from the EQB and invites our state leadership to prioritize the implementation of the recommended strategies to take action against EAB.

Appendix. 2024 Progress on EAB recommendations

Report recommendation: Slow the spread

Agency: MDA

Detection and monitoring

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update
Maintain a system to take reports of EAB (Report a Pest), investigate reports, and publish confirmed EAB finds (EAB Status Map).	Ongoing	We don't anticipate any changes to the process or reporting system in the near future.	Monitor the impact of management work on the rate of spread of EAB and adapt practices to maximize effectiveness. \$100,000 annually FY 21-23 (Pending approval by ENRTF).	The first round of this work was just concluded and resulted in detections in many new communities. Considering the importance of detection to initiating management for many communities, continuing this work will be worthwhile if more funds are available to support it. Currently there are no dollars for this work. The funds to support FY21-23 were obtained by DNR from ENRTF and MDA performed this part of the project for DNR.
Conduct targeted detection and monitoring across the state.	This is limited to follow up with communities after detection is made to help them initiate further detection and monitoring work.	We anticipate continuing this work although the rate of new detections has made that challenging and may lead to fewer in-person training events.		

Biological Control

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps
Coordinate the introduction and monitoring of biological control agents. \$100,000 (ENRTF) annually through FY 20. Introductions ongoing with USDA in-kind assistance.	Ongoing. ENRTF support has ended but USDA in-kind assistance continues and MDA supports needed staff-time with State general funds.	We anticipate continuing this work into the future. Each year adds a few new sites where biocontrol agents have been released.

Limit human-facilitated movement of EAB

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps
Maintain state resources to manage and enforce intrastate quarantines until 2030 - 2040.	This work has continued but the number of new counties has increased exponentially making it difficult to continue administering the quarantine. EAB has now been found in 52 of 87 counties and current projections are for EAB to be detected in all 87 counties by 2030.	MDA has been bringing this issue to partners and stakeholder groups over the past several months to evaluate if and when changes should occur to the regulatory approach with EAB.
Prepare to expand quarantine efforts to include interstate movement when USDA regulations end by 2020-2021.	When USDA deregulated EAB in 2021, MDA maintained state regulations and took over USDA's role on regulating movement into Minnesota. MDA also petitioned USDA to maintain regulations at the international border.	Same as above.
Maintain current outreach efforts regarding firewood. Currently supported with \$60,000 annually from USDA APHIS.	Ongoing. These federal funds have remained consistent for 15 years but are not guaranteed to be available in any given year.	MDA will continue to apply for these funds annually, but they are not guaranteed.

Training, education, and outreach

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Recommended actions using new resources	Update
Educate and train tree care professionals, communities, and citizens on identification of ash trees, proper transportation of firewood, management of infested tree and safety concerns. Currently supported with approx. \$50,000 annually from federal funds.	Ongoing. These federal funds have remained consistent for 15 years but are not guaranteed to be available in any given year.	Provide safety trainings and outreach materials to tree care professionals and homeowners on the serious and unique safety challenges associated with removing EAB-killed ash trees. \$50,000 annually until 2030.	This need appears to have been largely filled by the tree care industry and it is not apparent that the state needs to play a role in this aspect.
		Expand educational campaigns, advertisements, and other means to educate the general public and targeted audiences about the importance of slowing the spread of EAB and preparing private woodlands for EAB. \$100,000 annually until 2030.	MDA has directed more staff resources towards outreach, but additional dollars have not been available for purchasing advertising or otherwise funding targeted campaigns. However, MDA's role within this objective would be limited to slowing the spread of EAB. As the size of the EAB infestation in Minnesota has expanded, that messaging has less impact.

Agency: DNR

Training, education, and outreach

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update
Educate and train tree care professionals, communities, and citizens on identification of ash trees, proper transportation of firewood, management of infested tree and safety concerns. Currently supported with approx. \$50,000 annually from federal funds.	<p>Forest Health program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest health staff worked with Parks & Trails (PAT) to update and correct the current info. on the PAT firewood website. Information is on the webpage. This activity has concluded. • Forest Pest First Detector in partnership with the University of Minnesota is an ongoing effort. • Continues to update information on website. • Provides ongoing training to natural resources managers and woodland owners on EAB I.D., reporting, impact, and management. <p>Communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided outreach on not moving firewood in Hunting Regulations and State Forest Maps. 	<p>Forest Health and Urban & Community Forestry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to coordinate with MDA around campaigns to slowing the spread and educational workshops. • Assist the Forest Pest First Detector program through workshop support. • Maintain and update website as needed. <p>Communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote MDA's material via previously laid out strategies. 	Provide safety trainings and outreach materials to tree care professionals and homeowners on the serious and unique safety challenges associated with removing EAB-killed ash trees. \$50,000 annually until 2030.	<p>Urban and Community Forestry program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative is still in need of resources.

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update
Educate Minnesotans on the importance of transitioning black ash forested wetlands.	Cooperative Forest Management (CFM): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is in-process. UMN Extension has updated black ash guideline. CFM will host Silviculture program to present on black ash stand management at annual CFM meeting for CFM Foresters and plan writers. 	Cooperative Forest Management (CFM): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host Silviculture program to present on black ash stand management at annual CFM meeting for CFM Foresters and plan writers. 	Expand educational campaigns, advertisements, and other means to educate the general public and targeted audiences about the importance of slowing the spread of EAB and preparing private woodlands for EAB. \$100,000 annually until 2030.	DNR Forestry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources. A general public campaign working with OCO and there is no program lead identified. Private Forest Management (PFM) program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is ongoing. The PFM program conducts this work with private woodland and communities, but not the general public.
Certify or recertify 500 people per year as Tree inspectors.	Urban and Community Forestry program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of April 2024, there were 949 Certified Tree Inspectors. Tree Inspectors is an ongoing initiative in state statute. 	Urban and Community Forestry program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Communications staff to grow program and increase number of Tree Inspectors. 		

Workforce solutions

Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
Develop workforce solutions to increase the number of quality tree care providers to meet the increased demand in tree treatments, removals, and plantings by 2021-2025.	Urban and Community Forestry program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources. Creating a career pipeline takes time and energy, and staff capacity is limited. Some work being done through partnerships including Youth Engagement in Arboriculture program at UMN, AmeriCorps, and the Dept. of Labor & Industry with Arborist Apprenticeship. 	Urban and Community Forestry program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue seeking additional resources.

Biodiversity

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps
Require that all state grants or other state funded tree planting to replace ash trees must create or maintain diverse urban and community forest canopies.	Urban and Community Forestry program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants do not fund specific tree species with community makeups of 10% or more within that genera. 	Urban and Community Forestry program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue ongoing work.

Report recommendation: Support communities

Agency: MDA

Technical assistance

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps
Update the Minnesota Emerald Ash Borer Community Preparedness Manual and Model EAB Management Plan by 2021.	MDA produced a comprehensive manual for Minnesota communities " Guidelines to slow the growth and spread of emerald ash borer. "	There are no plans for production of additional materials.
Provide technical assistance to communities regarding EAB surveillance and management strategies. Currently supported with approximately \$40,000 from federal funds annually.	Ongoing. This is work to help communities with new detections of EAB figure out how they are going to manage it.	Funding for this work has been consistent but is not guaranteed from year to year. There will be an ongoing need for technical assistance as more communities discover EAB.

Emergency response

Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
Develop an emergency fund to allow communities to take action when EAB is found and before grants are available. \$100,000 annually.	These funds did not materialize but also would not go very far with the large number of communities finding EAB each year.	Dollars might be better directed toward existing grant opportunities for communities which allows for a more thoughtful use of available funds.

Agency: DNR

Technical assistance

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
Update the Minnesota Emerald Ash Borer Community Preparedness Manual and Model EAB Management Plan by 2021.	MDA has an updated manual and research doesn't appear to be amending our recommended management strategies significantly. Updates are being provided in more accessible ways such as through the website or educational programming.		Research and develop safety recommendations for working with and removing community ash trees. Information to be delivered in safety trainings and outreach materials listed in Slow the Spread category. \$100,000 for FY2021-2022.	Urban and Community Forestry program: • This initiative is still in need of resources.	DNR Staff recommends amending this initiative to say, "Communicate safety recommendations for working with and removing community ash trees. Information to be delivered in safety trainings and outreach materials." DNR does not conduct research but does support research and does communicate findings. Continue seeking additional resources to support academic institutions.
Provide technical assistance to communities regarding EAB surveillance and management strategies. Currently supported with approximately \$40,000 from federal funds annually.	<i>The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is the agency that has historically been supported with the federal funds listed. DNR does not obtain any funding for this initiative.</i>	Urban and Community Forestry: • Continue ongoing work.	Assess and recommend strategies to maintain community tree canopy levels that meet climate change targets as ash decline. \$100,000 for FY2021-2022.	Urban and Community Forestry program: • This initiative is in process and still in need of resources. LCCMR has funded needed canopy assessments for 2010 and 2020, however additional funding strategies will be needed to be pursued to assess	Urban and Community Forestry program: • Continue seeking additional resources.

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
	<p>Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the rate of spread increases, communities need additional technical support in the form of guidance/education in making management decisions. The UCF program anticipates being able to offer more support around this initiative once we are fully staffed. 			<p>canopy over time. Additionally, funding for ash treatments has only been eligible through the LCCMR Protect Community Forests grant and MN ReLeaf funding. Funding for maintaining existing trees will be needed to meet climate action targets.</p>	
<p>Update a list of tree species that could be considered as replacement species in our changing climate by 2021.</p>	<p>Urban and Community Forestry program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program recommends altering this recommendation. Developing a singular list is too research intensive for current funding. Recommendations are provided based on area needs and available research. <p>Silviculture program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Minnesota Extension has completed this through work they have done and have 	<p>DNR staff recommends editing the action to, "Provide assistance in determining climate adaptive tree species to be considered as replacement species." There are many variables when determining species can or should be planted based on not only the changing climate.</p> <p>Silviculture program: Maintain communications with UMN Extension on ongoing research.</p>	<p>Establish regional support and technical assistance for communities to support ash management at the local level. \$350,000 annually until 2040.</p>	<p>Urban and Community Forestry program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is in process. Additional staff are in the process of being hired. 	

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
	<p>made it publicly available. It incorporates MN DNR Division of Forestry Ash Management Guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Ash Woodlands: Recommendations for Minnesota Woodland Owners Replacement trees for ash woodlands with emerald ash borer 				

Incentives and financial resources

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
<p>Provide community forests grants for planning, removal, and replacement through June 1, 2022. Currently supported with \$1 million from general fund and ENRTF through 2020. All funds allotted to communities.</p>	<p>Urban and Community Forestry program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities in need of additional financial support. Funding, in Fiscal Year 2025, drops to \$400,000 annually and will primarily be funding staffing. 	<p>Urban and Community Forestry program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make request for additional funding. 	<p>Provide a community grant program to develop and implement ash management plans and provide education and technical assistance to professionals and homeowners. \$8.5 million annually until 2030.</p>	<p>Urban and Community Forestry program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is in process and still in need of resources. Nearly \$8 million has been made available during FY23 and FY24, however funding is reduced to \$400,000 annually beginning in FY25. 	<p>Urban and Community Forestry program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue seeking additional resources.

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
	Since FY2019, the UCF program has offered \$25,061,000.00 in state funding for community grants and has received over \$65 million in requests.				
			Explore and pilot an urban ash tree carbon credit program \$100,000 for FY2022.	Urban and Community Forestry program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is in process and has been led by MPCA in collaboration with the state tree board, the Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee. 	

Agency: MPCA

Incentives and financial resources

Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources
\$1M competitive grant RFP will be issued in fall of 2024 to incentivize increased utilization of all wood waste throughout the state.	Issue RFP, make awards, complete projects by 6/27/2024. Work on policy to increase this budget and make this a larger, ongoing grant program.	Explore and pilot an urban ash tree carbon credit program \$100,000 for FY2022.

Report recommendation: Transition ash forests

Agency: MDA

Planning

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps
Develop a response plan for EAB infestation in northern Minnesota designed to minimize spread to adjacent ash stands by 2022.	MDA has been involved with the response to detections in northern Minnesota, including on Chippewa National Forest. However, we have not created a unique response plan.	Bigger priority: landscape-level forest management planning. Out of the scope of MDA's work.

Agency: DNR

Planning

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update
Develop a response plan for EAB infestation in northern Minnesota designed to minimize spread to adjacent ash stands by 2022.	<p>Forest Health program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is concluded. Program Response plan was completed and MDA reviewed it. A plan for minimizing spread to adjacent stands is no longer relevant. EAB-spread in local area has never been shown to be practically possible. <p>Planning, and Timber programs:</p>	Recommendation to update this action to say "Develop a response plan for EAB infestation in northern Minnesota."	Promote EAB collaboratives within the Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Committees to address ash forest management across ownerships.	<p>DNR Forestry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is ongoing. DNR Forestry works with MFRC Landscape Committees regularly to address priorities across landscapes. Presentation given by DNR Forestry on "Black ash silviculture options" at the MFRC North Central Landscape Committee Meeting.

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is ongoing. DNR Forestry offered more harvest permits in black ash stands for the first five years of DNR's 10-year forest management strategic direction as a way to prepare for EAB infestation. Ash management has been incorporated into DNR plans (e.g. SFRMP). This has been achieved by offering more ash as part of timber sales, which was part of the sustainable harvest decision ~30,000 cords of ash sustainably. <p>Silviculture program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is ongoing. DNR Forestry diversifying some black ash stands this has led to two published case studies. 			

Technical assistance

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
Provide targeted outreach and forest management assistance to woodland owners that shares the most effective and current ash management strategies; designed to promote proactive decisions. Emphasis on newly detected EAB-infestation areas through 2030.	<p>Cooperative Forest Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is in process. Silviculture program will provide content on forest management strategies around EAB to PFM program. <p>Silviculture program, and Nursery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established stool beds of balsam poplar to supply vegetative cuttings as a reforestation option on public and private lands. 	<p>CFM program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead collaboration between Silviculture and Communications to develop needed outreach to broader audience. 	Provide technical support for and coordination of reforestation efforts, ash forest transition strategies, and best treatment options to all public and private woodland owners. \$150,000 annually until 2030.	<p>CFM program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources and in process. Support will be in the form of education to CFM Foresters to provide outreach to private landowners. 	<p>CFM program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFM will host Silviculture program to an upcoming CFM meeting to present to CFM Foresters and plan writers.

Incentives and financial resources

Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
Provide grants for planting, seeding, treatment, and ash harvest projects to public and private woodland owners. \$1 million annually until 2030.	<p>Cooperative Forest Management (CFM) program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources. <p>Silviculture program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources. Financial and staff capacity will need to be increased in order to meet this recommended action. 	<p>CFM and Silviculture programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue seeking additional resources.
Incentivize private woodland owners to harvest after local infestation or transition ash stands in advance of EAB. \$250,000 annually until 2030.	<p>Cooperative Forest Management (CFM) program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources. 	<p>CFM program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue seeking additional resources.

Report recommendation: Manage ash wood material

Agency: MPCA

Planning

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
Provide an up-to-date map of locations for ash wood use and disposal including manufacturers, biomass facilities, yard waste sites, etc.; identify gaps.	Currently working on a spreadsheet outlining wood waste flows that could be utilized to put together a map of entities producing, transporting, and utilizing wood waste throughout the state. The metro solid waste management plans call on counties to ensure that all wood yards are registered and reporting volume data.	Build out spreadsheet and create a mapping tool. Continue to update the database and mapping tool in an ongoing capacity. Utilize SCORE reporting for metro area counties to gather data on their wood yards and ensure that they're all registered with the county.	Assist counties and their communities with plan development to manage ash wood material in the highest and best way within their respective jurisdictions. \$150,000 annually until 2030.	Conversations with MPCA SCORE reporting staff have occurred and they are going to work on building out wood waste information into future reports.	Use SCORE reporting to capture data on metro area wood waste generators.
Share reports and data with local governments to assist in waste management plans and community assistance prioritization.	We have convened a wood waste stakeholder group that includes local gov't representatives and are working with metro area counties as they develop their wood waste management plans which are now required as a component of their solid waste management plans.	Continue wood waste stakeholder groups and assist counties to develop and implement their wood waste management plans.			Use SCORE reporting to capture data on metro area wood waste generators.

Incentives for ash wood markets

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
Convene discussions on the potential use of increased ash wood material in the waste and energy industries by 2022.	Stakeholder group continues to discuss this and SPC is receiving a grant that effectively acts as a tip fee of \$25/ton for wood waste. Commissioner has the power to require a tip fee be instated in '27 in order for SPC to receive their final 10% of grant funding that has been withheld (~\$1.5 million).	Finalize Rahr/Koda's grant which will allow them to expand their utilization of largely urban ash for energy, and continue to encourage new energy industries. We need to continue to work on policy that ensures that wood waste qualifies as a carbon free technology for the purposes of reaching the goal of carbon free by 2040.	Create production incentives for existing and new forest products businesses that promote the highest and best use of the influx of Minnesota ash wood. \$1.5 million annually for 2021-2026.	No funding has been allocated to production incentives. The private market has seen some growth in demand for urban wood and specifically thermally modified ash.	
			Create consumer or building contractor incentives to encourage the purchase of ash products (flooring, cabinets, firewood, etc.) until 2040.	No funding has been allocated to this.	
			Provide incentives for community facilities (schools, community centers, hospitals, etc.) to retro-fit or install new energy or heating systems that use ash wood.	There is no current incentive for this. This could be built into new policy.	

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
			Assess opportunities to repurpose decommissioned (or outgoing) coal or biomass energy-recovery facilities for ash biofuel, wood chips, torrefied and non-torrefied pellet, or other ash energy production that meet emission guidelines.	Hinges largely on the PUC's decision regarding the carbon free status of woody biomass feedstocks in power plants.	
			Incentivize the use of ash wood material by energy facilities that currently have the ability to utilize biomass by 2025.	Funding has been allocated to both District Energy and Koda Energy to incentivize the ongoing and new utilization of ash wood and other woody biomass energy feedstocks.	Grant agreement with Koda still needs to be finalized.

Incentives for wood processing

Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
<p>Provide business incentives or community grants to establish mobile ash wood processing systems that can be moved around the state as necessary and include equipment for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wood chipping and debarking to ready ash for transportation to mills or compost sites, -Wood processing (portable sawmills, portable molders and planers), and -Fuel preparation and composting; \$1.5 million annually for 2021-2026. 	RFP to be released in Fall of this year.	This could be addressed with some of the funding available in the 2024 Wood Waste Utilization grant, but more funding is needed in years to come.

Agency: DNR

Planning

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
Provide an up-to-date map of locations for ash wood use and disposal including manufacturers, biomass facilities, yard waste sites, etc.; identify gaps.	Utilization and Marketing program update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The large- scale commercial biomass facilities and mills that will take ash are listed in our directory here. There are smaller firewood consumers that aren't listed anywhere but the volume they could use would be negligible and a challenge to locate and maintain a voluntary list. 	Utilization and Marketing - This initiative is ongoing. <p>DNR Staff recommends amending to: “Provide the current known locations for ash wood use and disposal including manufacturers, biomass energy facilities, compost sites, land fill sites, etc. (MPCA, DNR)”</p> <p>AND</p> <p>“Share reports and data with local governments to assist in waste management plans and community assistance prioritization. MPCA, DNR”</p>	Assist counties and their communities with plan development to manage ash wood material in the highest and best way within their respective jurisdictions. \$150,000 annually until 2030.	Utilization and Marketing program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources. Current staff is only conducting consultation. Better engagement with stakeholders (e.g. Tree care companies, municipalities, forest products facilities, etc.) in the marketplace to develop better solutions. Additional resources would allow us to move into implementation. <p>Urban and Community Forestry program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources. There is a need to identify and recruit more mills for urban wood. 	Utilization and Marketing, and Urban and Community Forestry - Continue seeking additional resources. <p>DNR Staff recommends amending to: “Directly assist counties and their communities with plan development to manage ash wood material in the highest and best way within their respective jurisdictions. \$150,000 annually until 2030. MPCA, DNR”</p>

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
			Working with partners, identify priority measures to reduce costs and barriers to move ash to mills from both public and private forests by 2022.	Utilization and Marketing (U&M) program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative is still in need of resources. 	Utilization and Marketing - Continue seeking additional resources. DNR Staff recommends amending or adding the following recommended actions: “Work with public and private partners to identify priority measures to reduce costs and barriers to move ash to mills from both public and private forests. (DNR, MPCA) Conduct an analysis of urban forest inventory data to quantify current and future wood waste challenges. (DNR) Expand the directory of ash wood consuming facilities and conduct wood consumption surveys to better estimate current urban wood consumption. (DNR, MPCA)”

Incentives for ash wood markets

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
Convene discussions on the potential use of increased ash wood material in the waste and energy industries by 2022.	<p>Utilization and Marketing program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions are ongoing in collaboration MPCA and other stakeholders. Unable to fully engage due to current staffing levels. <p>St. Paul Cogen is seeking a Power agreement extension with Xcel Energy as the current agreement expires at the end of 2024.</p>	<p>To make significant progress on this initiative further investment in research and from private industry is needed.</p> <p>Utilization and Marketing, and Urban and Community Forestry - Connect with MPCA for continued updates and seek additional resources.</p> <p>DNR Staff recommends adding the following to recommended actions, "Encourage increased ash utilization in the various forest products sectors including sawmills, pulp/paper mills, biomass energy, mulch, etc. (DNR, MPCA, Commerce)</p> <p>Expand the EAB quarantine so that intrastate transportation of ash products to the markets is not impeded. (MDA)"</p>	Create production incentives for existing and new forest products businesses that promote the highest and best use of the influx of Minnesota ash wood. \$1.5 million annually for 2021-2026.	<p>Utilization and Marketing (U&M) program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources. 	<p>Utilization and Marketing - Continue seeking additional resources.</p> <p>DNR staff recommends amending and adding to include: "Consumer education campaign designed to increase consumer demand for ash and/or wood waste products such as biomass energy, furniture, flooring, biochar, biofuels, etc. (DNR, MPCA)</p> <p>Provide incentives for community facilities (schools, community centers, hospitals, etc.) to retrofit or install energy or heating systems that use ash/waste wood. (Commerce, MPCA, DNR).</p> <p>Evaluate opportunities to repurpose decommissioned or outgoing coal or biomass energy-recovery facilities for woody biomass energy production that meet emission guidelines. (MPCA, Commerce)</p> <p>Incentivize the use of ash wood material by energy facilities that currently have the ability to utilize woody biomass. (Commerce, MPCA)"</p>

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
			Provide incentives for community facilities (schools, community centers, hospitals, etc.) to retro-fit or install new energy or heating systems that use ash wood.	Utilization and Marketing (U&M) program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative is still in need of resources. These heating systems are capital intensive and more maintenance, requiring financial incentives to increase adoption. Once through the financial hurdles they are worthwhile for carbon neutrality and reduction of wood waste. Although of value, these facilities consume a relatively low-volume, as it's estimated that District Energy equates to what 300 schools would anticipate to use 	Utilization and Marketing - Continue seeking additional resources.

Incentives for wood processing

Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update	Next steps
DNR Staff recommends adding the following recommended action, "Provide support for new and existing business ventures that add to the number of ash consuming facilities in the state. (Commerce, MPCA, DNR, DEED)"	<p>Provide business incentives or community grants to establish mobile ash wood processing systems that can be moved around the state as necessary and include equipment for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wood chipping and debarking to ready ash for transportation to mills or compost sites, -Wood processing (portable sawmills, portable molders and planers), and -Fuel preparation and composting; \$1.5 million annually for 2021-2026. 	<p>Utilization and Marketing (U&M) program update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative is still in need of resources. <p>Urban and Community Forestry program update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative is still in need of resources. There are local units of government who have taken this on independently, however many will be unable to enact utilization efforts without additional supports. 	<p>Utilization and Marketing, and Urban and Community Forestry - Continue seeking additional resources.</p> <p>DNR Staff recommends adding or amending recommended actions to: "Provide business incentives or community grants to establish ash wood processing systems or facilities. This may include aggregation yards, wood processing equipment, etc. (Commerce, MPCA, DNR)</p> <p>Provide education and/or scholarships for the technical training and skill development necessary to successfully operate a wood processing or marketing business. (Commerce, DNR, MPCA)"</p> <p>DNR Staff recommends adding the Department of Commerce to this initiative as we believe they will be a necessary collaborator on this initiative. Additionally, DNR would recommend amending to not limiting this "mobile" ash wood processing.</p>

Agency: MDA

Planning

Recommended actions using new resources	Update
Working with partners, identify priority measures to reduce costs and barriers to move ash to mills from both public and private forests by 2022.	Only a portion of this objective falls within the scope of MDA's work and that would be related to regulations and impact on ability to market and utilize ash. As described above, MDA has been meeting informally with partners and stakeholders to assess if changes to current regulatory practices are justified at this time.

Incentives for ash wood markets

Recommended actions using new resources	Update
Create production incentives for existing and new forest products businesses that promote the highest and best use of the influx of Minnesota ash wood. \$1.5 million annually for 2021-2026.	This objective falls outside of the scope of MDA's work.

Agency: Commerce

Incentives for ash wood markets

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Recommended actions using new resources
Convene discussions on the potential use of increased ash wood material in the waste and energy industries by 2022.	Support at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for Xcel Energy's power purchase agreement with St. Paul Cogeneration (see eDocket number 21-590). The plant is biomass-fired and provides heat and electricity for District Energy St. Paul, www.ever-greenenergy.com/project/st-paul-cogeneration/	Provide incentives for community facilities (schools, community centers, hospitals, etc.) to retro-fit or install new energy or heating systems that use ash wood.
	Support at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for evaluating carbon-free resources on a lifecycle basis (see eDocket number 23-151). Recommendation to the Commission to initiate a separate docket to define the requirements for sustainable and waste biomass.	Assess opportunities to repurpose decommissioned (or outgoing) coal or biomass energy-recovery facilities for ash biofuel, wood chips, torrefied and non-torrefied pellet, or other ash energy production that meet emission guidelines.
		Incentivize the use of ash wood material by energy facilities that currently have the ability to utilize biomass by 2025.

Report recommendation: Lead, engage and encourage

Agency: All

EAB taskforce

Recommended actions using current resources	Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update
Designate an EAB taskforce with membership from relevant agencies and stakeholder groups that identifies measurable goals related to these actions, measures progress towards meeting those goals, and regularly reports back to the EQB Board Members.	Ongoing	Maintain partnerships with agencies in taskforce and loop EQB when needed.	Implement the recommendations of the 2019 Emerald Ash Borer in Minnesota Report ; identify and explore new strategies as they emerge.	Ongoing

Agency: MPCA

EAB taskforce

Recommended actions using new resources	Next steps
Explore ways to minimize the loss of carbon sequestration, mitigate expected impacts, and adapt to the changing climate, while addressing state climate change and fossil fuel reduction goals.	Focus on biochar production and utilization in areas of the state that have shown a benefit in its use.

Expand research

Recommended actions using new resources	Next steps
Expand research and communicate research findings for the following topics: Ash wood materials such as ash biofuel, biochar, engineered wood products, and torrefied and non-torrefied wood pellets.	Research how the loss of black ash forests impacts regional watersheds and other tree species. This is new and the impacts have the potential to be significant on an ecosystem level.

Agency: DNR

Expand research

Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update
<p>Timber and Silviculture program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple silviculture practices on ash cover types with follow up assessment/ monitoring, will be releasing publishing more case studies to Great Lakes Silviculture Library. • Assessing reforestation techniques, but UMN's work is more rigorous. <p>Silviculture program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative is in-process, however some research has been completed. Growth and survival of planted replacement species is being monitored in DNR FOR's case study database for eight forested ash sites over 100 acres across central, northwestern, and northeastern MN. <p>Additional projects supported by the Silviculture program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR involvement in Superior National Forest Assisted Migration Plan. DNR supporting through in-kind support through review. • Chippewa NF ongoing EAB study (D'Amato, Slesak, Grinde, Palik), about 10 years; DNR support through reviewing grant proposal and providing a letter of support. 	<p>Looking for more support to get funding to look at habitat impacts; we are interested in vegetation outcomes of planted species.</p>	<p>Expand research and communicate research findings for the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash wood materials such as ash biofuel, biochar, engineered wood products, and torrefied and non-torrefied wood pellets. • Reforestation techniques that favor non-ash species. • EAB impacts to or interactions with black ash forests, floodplains, upland hardwood forests, and hydrology. • Best management practices and techniques, including in wet areas, as the changing climate presents less frosts and hard freezes. 	<p>Utilization and Marketing (U&M) program: Research on these forest products is ongoing but often not specific to ash.</p> <p>Silviculture program: This initiative is ongoing through continued partnerships with the University of Minnesota.</p> <p>Timber program: This initiative is a priority listed by division for research.</p>

Update	Next steps	Recommended actions using new resources	Update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Bird Conservancy grant, collaboration with Carlton County and Fond du Lac to look at ash replacement species on state, Tribal, and county land; we will be tracking this with our standard regen survey process. DNR supporting through in-kind support by planning and administering our projects, paying for seedlings. Windmuller-Campione, M. A., Russell, M. B., Slesak, R. A., & Lochner, M. (2020). Regeneration responses in black ash (<i>Fraxinus nigra</i>) wetlands: implications for forest diversification to address emerald ash borer (<i>Agrilus planipennis</i>). <i>New Forests</i>, 1-22. Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe CPL grant. DNR supporting by identifying over 100 acres of state land for planting and evaluating success of planted seedlings. DNR Forestry diversifying some black ash stands (2 published case studies; 6 on-going; ~500 acres worth of other operational examples). <p>Forest Health update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have assisted University of Minnesota plant pathology and entomology researchers in finding research sites for multiple years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ biocontrol of EAB with fungal pathogens (2024) ✓ biocontrol of EAB (2022) ✓ biocontrol of EAB (2021) 			

Memo

Date: August 9, 2024

To: Environmental Quality Board Members

From: Catherine Neuschler, EQB Executive Director

RE: Proposed fiscal year 2025 EQB staff workplan

The EQB has generally used the work planning model shown here. The picture visualizes how developing the annual organizational workplan is guided by the EQB's strategic plan; the organizational workplan then guides the development of individual staff work plans and the detailed creation of specific project plans to present goals, deliverables, and timelines.

Figure 1. Workplanning Model



FY25 workplan overview

We have been working on developing the FY2025 organizational and individual work plans, laying out key work and deliverables for the time period between now and June 30, 2025.

The workplan is grouped into overarching bodies of work – environmental review; climate; water and the water plan; biodiversity (pollinators, emerald ash borer, and genetically engineered organisms); engagement; equity; and board operations. Within each program area, specific projects that we propose to work on next year are listed along with some additional details, key timelines, staff leads, and interagency support needs along with an estimate of whether the amount of support work needed is expected to be high, medium, or low. New this year, the workplan also lists which strategic plan outcome and deliverables each work plan item fits under.

The plan focuses on projects. Since many projects have multiple phases, the workplan aims to specifically scope the work planned to be completed in FY25. (The workplan generally does not include day-to-day work or administrative tasks, though those are included in individual staff workplans.)

FY25 workplan highlights

This memo discusses resources and provides some highlights; the complete workplan is provided as Attachment 1.

Environmental review

The environmental review program consists of four permanent full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. These are the planning director, two program administrators, and a technical assistance position. The program also includes the temporary (currently through FY25) FTE position focused on the climate calculator project and related support. The communications and engagement coordinator provides support to many ER projects, and our Board administrator plays a key role in production of the EQB Monitor.

The day-to-day work of the program includes the regular tasks undertaken to ensure the functioning of the program, such as program administration, technical assistance, and outreach. Specific projects and initiatives are more discrete, with defined deliverables and likely end dates. Most of the projects are designed to make programmatic updates or improvements; the driver of these changes may be legislative requirements or program needs identified by staff or coming from the continuous improvement process. For projects related to environmental review, the workplan identifies which specific continuous improvement idea they will address.

The ER program work was presented in detail to ERIS in their June 2024 meeting and is summarized here.

- 2024 Mandatory Categories report – The program is required to conduct an evaluation of the environmental review mandatory categories and complete a report every three years. Staff are drafting the report in collaboration with the co-authoring agencies, to complete the final report by December 1, 2024. Because the report includes recommendations, the workplan also includes a placeholder for taking on those recommendations as needed.
- Climate and greenhouse gas emissions calculator – In 2023 the EQB received funding to construct a Minnesota-specific GHG emission calendar to standardize the inclusion of climate pollution data in environmental review. Work to develop the calculator, associated guidance and user manual, and preparing to train users will continue through FY25. The Board received an update on this work in July 2024. The staff are also evaluating our ability to improve guidance for answering the EAW form questions related to climate resiliency.
- ER data collection and management – The program is continuing to work on data management, data gathering, and data transparency. EQB staff plan to develop and implement two survey projects to gather additional data. The first is an ER process and engagement survey designed to provide better information about the process of preparing environmental review documents (and how long that takes), and the second is a quarterly survey of RGUs that have recently completed an environmental review process, to evaluate the effectiveness of our guidance documents and technical assistance. We are also working to develop a data website that will regularly update and share key program metrics.
- ER guidance and training – A focus on improving guidance and training was a key outcome of EQB's FY23 continuous improvement process. Continuing work from FY24, EQB plans in the next few months to launch a refresh of our existing guidance that presents the information in a more accessible web-based format and corrects outdated information. Once the new framework for guidance materials is launched, EQB staff will begin to work on areas of new guidance. Planned for FY25 is to provide guidance on submitting and responding to petitions for EAWs; reviewing and likely updating and expanding guidance on alternative urban areawide reviews, with a focus on supporting energy transition communities in using this tool; and developing guidance and best practices for consideration of tribal resources in environmental review. ER program staff also want to develop better methods of sharing information with RGUs, particularly local government RGUs, such as EQB-hosted webinars or training days and participation in events or conferences that may bring together local government RGUs.
- Cumulative effects and decision criteria – In FY25, EQB needs to continue to engage with local government RGUs to better identify any needs they have related to implementing the decision criteria used to determine if an EIS is needed. One of the decision criteria is “cumulative potential effects”, and consideration of this criteria interacts with tracking work on cumulative impacts and how that work can and should be aligned with environmental review.
- Regulatory development and rulemaking – The 2024 legislative session resulted in two important areas of work for EQB.

- Gas and Oil Production – EQB is participating in a DNR-managed Minnesota Gas and Oil Resources Technical Advisory Committee to make recommendations about a regulatory framework for gas and oil production in Minnesota. EQB was also directed to, as needed, adopt or amend rules to establish mandatory categories for the environmental review of gas and oil production. EQB is directed to use an expedited rulemaking process and the rules must be proposed by May 2026.
- Energy Infrastructure Permitting – Laws of Minnesota 2024, Chapter 126 (SF4942) made multiple changes to the state’s process for permitting of large energy projects such as power generating facilities, battery storage facilities, and transmission lines. EQB was directed to make conforming changes to the environmental review rules using the expedited rulemaking process. These rule changes will need to be proposed by November 2025; we are currently evaluating needs and work is expected to begin in January 2025.
- Continuous Improvement – In order to continually improve the environmental review program’s effectiveness, the Board has asked staff to regularly implement the process of collecting ideas for programmatic improvements, scoring those ideas using the matrix developed in FY23, and identifying key improvement projects. Originally planned to occur biannually, which would have meant conducting the project again in FY25, ERIS discussed lengthening this schedule to allow more time to work to implement key improvements. Therefore, this work is no longer on the workplan. We anticipate this work happening on a four-year cycle.

A significant amount of EQB’s project work in environmental review relies on interagency resources – particularly tech reps and environmental review staff. In constructing the workplan we have tried to be clear about the level of interagency support needed and whether that low (such as simple review of materials), medium (likely requests for input), or high (work production). Most projects will need at least review and input.

Climate

Implementing the Climate Action Framework and meeting Minnesota’s climate goals is a critical ongoing effort across state agencies; as a member of the climate subcabinet, EQB is engaged in this work. EQB will be working to support development of Climate Action Framework metrics and measures to effectively report on Minnesota’s progress towards the Framework’s goals. In addition, each year the climate subcabinet sets two One Minnesota climate goal focus areas. For the next year, one of those focus areas is reducing climate pollution through industrial decarbonization. EQB will be part of the work to develop the regulatory environment for next generation green industries like sustainable aviation fuel.

Water Assessment and Reports

Under Minn. Stat. 103A, EQB is directed to consolidate certain assessments of the state’s water quality and water quantity every five years and to prepare a report on policy issues related to the state’s groundwater protection. The next report is due in September 2025, so we will spend FY25 working with key agencies to develop the report.

Biodiversity

Pollinator protection work is high priority work implementing an Executive Order. EQB is the home of the state pollinator coordinator and draws on resources from the Interagency Pollinator Protection Team. In FY24, the team developed a new pollinator action framework, which will be implemented in FY25. This work includes the annual pollinator report, which will also include an update to the scorecards that describe progress in protecting Minnesota’s pollinators. We’re also hosting on pollinator day at the State Fair’s EcoExperience and participating in other community pollinator events.

EQB is continuing to serve as the convener for state agency work around emerald ash borer, to support effective collaboration across the enterprise.

Staff are also continuing to work on the technical and regulatory landscape around genetically engineered organisms and developing a framework for implementing EQB's authorities as needed. We have been working to move forward in a way that balances the likely need for the framework and the capacity and resources available to both EQB staff and our interagency partners.

Engagement and Equity

The workplan includes some key items to support our engagement outcomes with a focus on ensuring we are doing so in alignment with our equity value.

The main project for engagement is to host the 2024 Environmental Congress in September. Planning is well underway, and we are looking forward to a good event. We also want to develop relationships, plans, and a framework for bringing partner and public presentations to the Board. We will also be working to develop connections that support future public Board member recruitment. Finally, we will be looking into how our member agencies and others evaluate and consider disproportionate impacts in their work.

Operations

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 FY25 we do need to review and likely revise our record retention schedule, particularly in light of our new data gathering plans.

RESOLUTION OF THE MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Approval of the Fiscal Year 2025 Organizational work plan

The EQB's mission is to support informed decision-making that protects and enhances Minnesota's environmental quality. We accomplish this by fostering meaningful conversations, supporting collaborative policy and program development, and ensuring effective environmental review of potentially impactful projects.

EQB adopts the attached Fiscal Year 2025 Organizational Work Plan (Work Plan), which aligns with EQB's mission, strategic plan, budget, and authorities. The Work Plan identifies key projects with details and FY25 tasks and timelines. It 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.03 requires the adoption of an annual budget and work program.
- Minnesota Statutes, chapters 116C and 116D provide the authority to implement the EQB organizational work plan.
- Minnesota Statutes, chapters 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 2025 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 21, 2024.

Nancy Daubenberger, Chair
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Date: _____

Attachments: Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 EQB Organizational Workplan

Body of Work	Project	Details	Key Timelines	Outcome	Main Strategy	Additional Strategy	ER Improvements Addressed	Cross-Agency Needs
Environmental Review	Revised ER Data Management Plan	Revise ER data management plan and implement in FY25.	Implementation throughout FY25	Outcome 3	Strategy 3		Data	Low (tech reps)
Environmental Review	ER Process and Engagement Survey	Implement survey of RGUs actively working in ER to identify length of ER process from initiation to complete submittal and impacts of public engagement.	Implementation start September 3	Outcome 3	Strategy 3		Data	Low (tech reps)
Environmental Review	ER Data website	Establish EQB data sharing website to promote transparency and sharing of data on ER processes. (Data collected as directed by DMP).	October 1	Outcome 3	Strategy 3		Data	Low (tech reps)
Environmental Review	ER Customer Service Survey	Implement quarterly survey of RGUs that have completed ER recently to identify usefulness of EQB's guidance and technical assistance	Implementation start October 1 (for projects July 1 - Sept 30)	Outcome 3	Strategy 3	Strategy 1	Data	Low (tech reps)
Environmental Review	ER Technical Assistance Resource Library	Develop resource library for ER staff providing technical assistance to promote consistency in interpretation and tracking of areas of assistance needed.	Begin June 3, 2024	Outcome 3	Strategy 3		Data	Low (tech reps)
Environmental Review	ER Historical Data Consolidation	Review past ER project data and consolidate most recent project data to support long-term ER measures tracking	Begin June 3, 2024	Outcome 3	Strategy 3		Data	Low (tech reps)
Environmental Review	2024 Mandatory Categories Report	Complete mandatory categories report to the legislature	Draft report to ERIS in September 2024 Final report approved by Board November 2024 Report submitted December 1, 2024	Outcome 3	Strategy 4	Strategy 1	MC	High (co-authors - MPCA, MDNR, MnDOT, Comm - and tech reps)
Environmental Review	GHG Emission Calculator	Develop Minnesota-specific GHG Calculator Tool	Scoping complete September 2024 Tool development September 2024 to June 2025 Final calculator due June 30, 2025	Outcome 3	Strategy 2	Strategy 1	GHG	High (tech advisory team)
Environmental Review	GHG Emission Calculator Guidance	The GHG Emission Calculator tool user manual will provide direction for the overall calculation of GHG pollution and source-specific instructions as needed. Once the user manual is complete, EQB staff will update the overall environmental review guidance on how to answer the climate pollution question in the EAW form.	Final calculator with user manual due June 30, 2025 Revise guidance by December 31, 2025	Outcome 3	Strategy 2		GHG	Med-High (tech advisory team, tech reps)
Environmental Review	GHG Emission Calculator	Prepare to roll out and train users on Minnesota-specific GHG calculator tool	Prepare for training: March - June 2025 Training: July 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025	Outcome 3	Strategy 2	Strategy 1	GHG	Low (tech reps)
Environmental Review	Climate Resiliency Guidance	Development of the Minnesota-specific GHG calculator tool will include some information on resiliency, and the ability to add more quantitative resiliency information in the future. EQB staff are considering our ability to improve the existing guidance related to answering the EAW question on resiliency (Q7) outside of the calculator tool.	TBD	Outcome 3	Strategy 2	Strategy 1	GHG	Med-High (tech advisory team, tech reps)
Environmental Review	Refresh of Existing ER Guidance	Updated ER guidance format and webpages and removal of outdated information.	October 1, 2024	Outcome 3	Strategy 1		Guidance and Training	Low-Med (tech reps)
Environmental Review	AUAR Guidance	Review existing AUAR guidance, identify needed updates and expansion and develop those updates.	March 1, 2025 - Complete evaluation and define needs	Outcome 3	Strategy 1		Guidance and Training	Medium (tech reps)
Environmental Review	Petition Guidance	Develop best practices and steps for both submitting and reviewing petitions	April 1, 2025	Outcome 3	Strategy 1		Guidance and Training	Medium (tech reps)
Environmental Review	Guidance on Tribal Resources Consideration	Update guidance to provide best practices that support RGUs in effectively considering tribal resources. Identify where EAW form updates may be needed to best support these considerations.	TBD in coordination with Tribes	Outcome 3	Strategy 1	Outcome 1, Strategy 4	Guidance and Training	High (tech reps, Tribal coordination)
Environmental Review	ER Guidance Training	Inform and train RGUs on new ER guidance, to support them in finding and using the information, via webinars, conference presentations, etc. Identify additional needs to provide this kind of broad training and technical assistance.	Start in Fall 2024	Outcome 3	Strategy 1		Guidance and Training	Low-Med (tech reps)

Body of Work	Project	Details	Key Timelines	Outcome	Main Strategy	Additional Strategy	ER Improvements Addressed	Cross-Agency Needs
Environmental Review	Cumulative Impacts and Decision Criteria	Engage with local government RGUs to identify any needs around decision criteria. Track MPCA's air-focused cumulative impacts rulemaking; identify and document stakeholder desires related to cumulative impacts and how they may relate to environmental review.	Ongoing	Outcome 3	Strategy 1	Outcome 4, Strategy 4	Decision Criteria	Low
Environmental Review	Placeholder - Mandatory Category Recommendations	Review mandatory category recommendations and consider which to start based on likely efforts and results.	Start January 2025.	Outcome 3	Strategy 4		MC	High (co-authors - MPCA, MDNR, MnDOT, Comm - and tech reps)
Environmental Review	Minnesota Gas and Oil Resources Technical Advisory Committee	Participate in TAC to develop regulatory framework.	Report due to legislature by January 15, 2025	Outcome 3	Strategy 4		MC	High (DNR managed)
Environmental Review	Gas and Oil Production Rulemaking	Update mandatory categories to include any needed review for oil and gas production.	Notice of intent to adopt must be published by May 2026	Outcome 3	Strategy 4		MC	High
Environmental Review	Energy Infrastructure Permitting Rulemaking	Expedited rulemaking to conform to the changes made in the 2024 omnibus bill (including RGU for ISFSI, CO2 pipelines, and conforming changes for energy projects)	Notice of intent to adopt must be published by November 2025 (18 months per 14.125)	Outcome 3	Strategy 4		MC	Medium (tech reps)
Environmental Review	Technical assistance	Provide regular, ongoing technical assistance to RGUs, the public, project proposers, etc. that meets statutory timelines.	Ongoing	Outcome 3	Strategy 1		Guidance and Training	None
Climate	Climate Action Framework Reporting	Participate in revision to Climate Action Framework, with a specific focus on developing appropriate reporting measures and a long-term reporting framework.	As determined by Climate Subcabinet	Outcome 2	Strategy 3			High (MPCA managed)
Climate	One Minnesota Climate Goals	Participate in the focus area for industrial decarbonization, by participating in the development of the regulatory environment for next generation green industries like sustainable aviation fuel.	As determined by Climate Subcabinet	Outcome 2	Strategy 3			High (as directed by leads)
Water Plan	2025 Water Assessment Report	5-year update to water assessments	Starting in August 2024, develop plans with agencies Due September 2025	Outcome 2	Strategy 2			High (MDA, MPCA, MDH, DNR, MnDOT, and water agencies and groups)
Biodiversity - Pollinators	Pollinator Action Framework implementation	Working with the interagency pollinator protection team to identify areas of synergy and collaboration, keeping track of progress	Results are included in pollinator annual report completed by the end of each calendar year	Outcome 2	Strategy 1			High (IPPT)
Biodiversity - Pollinators	Annual Pollinator Report + Scorecards	Working with the interagency pollinator protection team. Developing timelines, leading team meetings, engaging with subject matter experts, and drafting annual report	Reports completed by end of each calendar year	Outcome 2	Strategy 1			High (IPPT)
Biodiversity - Pollinators	Pollinator public events	Working with MPCA, develop and host a pollinator day at the EcoExperience (August 29). Participate in other public events as opportunities arise.	As scheduled	Outcome 2	Strategy 1	Outcome 1		Low
Biodiversity - EAB	Convene EAB Workgroup	Continue to convene group for discussion, and identify where EQB can support effective collaboration	Ongoing	Outcome 2	Strategy 4			Low-Med
Biodiversity - Genetically Engineered Organisms	Genetically Engineered Organism Program Research and Development	- Conduct ongoing coordination/connection with key agencies - Answer key questions about process and develop framework for implementation - Track projects to identify when the need to implement the state's authorities is likely to arise	Ongoing	Outcome 2	Strategy 4	Outcome 3		Medium (tech reps)
Engagement	Environmental Congress	Host 2024 Environmental Congress	Events September 23 - 26, 2024 Report outs received October 2024	Outcome 1	Strategy 2			Medium-High (agency staff)
Engagement	Develop connections that support future Board recruitment	Work with NEXUS - Board recruitment	To prepare for public member terms expiring January 2026	Outcome 1	Strategy 1			None
Engagement	Partnership presentations	Develop relationships, plan, and framework for bringing partner and public presentations to the Board	Ongoing	Outcome 1	Strategy 3			None

Body of Work	Project	Details	Key Timelines	Outcome	Main Strategy	Additional Strategy	ER Improvements Addressed	Cross-Agency Needs
Equity	Identify current status of disproportionate impacts evaluation	Interview EQB member agencies and develop list of tools and data being used to identify disproportionate impacts	Ongoing	Outcome 4	Strategy 1			Medium
Board Operations	Record retention schedule	Review and update record retention schedule	Complete by end of FY25					None

Workplan Projects by Outcome and Strategy	
Outcome 1	
Strategy 1	Develop connections that support future Board recruitment
Strategy 2	Environmental Congress
Strategy 3	Partnership presentations
Outcome 2	
Strategy 1	Annual Pollinator Report + Scorecards Pollinator Action Framework implementation Pollinator Day at State Fair
Strategy 2	2025 Water Assessment Report
Strategy 3	Climate Action Framework Reporting
Strategy 4	Convene EAB Workgroup Genetically Engineered Organism Program Research and Development
Outcome 3	
Strategy 1	AUAR Guidance Cumulative Impacts and Decision Criteria ER Guidance Training Guidance on Tribal Resources Consideration Minor extensions of existing ER guidance Petition Guidance Refresh of Existing ER Guidance Technical assistance
Strategy 2	Climate Resiliency Guidance GHG Emission Calculator GHG Emission Calculator Guidance
Strategy 3	ER Customer Service Survey ER Data website ER Historical Data Consolidation ER Process and Engagement Survey ER Technical Assistance Resource Library Revised ER Data Management Plan
Strategy 4	2024 Mandatory Categories Report Energy Infrastructure Permitting Rulemaking Gas and Oil Production Rulemaking Minnesota Gas and Oil Resources Technical Advisory Committee Placeholder - Mandatory Category Recommendations
Outcome 4	
Strategy 1	Identify current status of disproportionate impacts

Improvement Ideas Description	ER Projects by Improvement Addressed
Data Evaluates the potential to improve the EQB data management/gathering plan in order to support better annual reporting about the impact of environmental review.	Data ER Customer Service Survey ER Data website ER Historical Data Consolidation ER Process and Engagement Survey ER Technical Assistance Resource Library Revised ER Data Management Plan
Decision Criteria EQB reviews and revises the decision criteria in the statutes and rules. EQB addresses the following improvement ideas (some overlap with GHGs): * Establish threshold criteria for significance of impact - improved guidance and criteria for RGU decisions * Provide clarity that RGUs should evaluate the significance of greenhouse gas emissions in the context of broader statutory and policy goals. * Add guidance about what level of GHG emissions should require an EIS.	Decision Criteria Cumulative Impacts and Decision Criteria
GHG Supports better GHG analysis, provide opportunity to support life cycle analysis of GHG emissions	GHG Climate Resiliency Guidance GHG Emission Calculator GHG Emission Calculator Guidance
Guidance and Training The EQB should continually identify, document, and disseminate best practices through its website; trainings or workshops for RGUs, project proposers, and consultants; and supporting documents.	Guidance and Training AUAR Guidance ER Guidance Training Guidance on Tribal Resources Consideration Minor extensions of existing ER guidance Petition Guidance Refresh of Existing ER Guidance Technical assistance
MC Mandatory categories, thresholds, and potential for new categories	MC 2024 Mandatory Categories Report Energy Infrastructure Permitting Rulemaking Gas and Oil Production Rulemaking Minnesota Gas and Oil Resources Technical Advisory Committee Placeholder - Mandatory Category Recommendations

August 6, 2024

Dear Chair Daubenberger and Environmental Quality Board Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony for your consideration during the August Environmental Quality Board meeting. This letter is submitted on behalf of a coalition of Minnesotans, people retired from public service at our state and federal agencies, and national friends. We believe that our government needs to more clearly demonstrate the conservation values shared by Minnesotans. These values include the sustainable stewardship of our water, air, land, and wildlife; and preserving the health of our environment for future generations. Our public agencies are expected to embody these values in their actions and provide clear, easily accessible, and timely information to the public. Improving government transparency will empower people with the knowledge needed to effectively collaborate in full partnership with our public agencies.

The coalition offers the following recommendations that are expected to improve transparency as our state agencies fulfill their missions and demonstrate integrity during policy development and implementation.

1) We recommend state agencies effectively utilize digital tools to preserve information for the public and not discard records. We request all agencies comply with the Administrative Procedure Act and Official Records Act in a manner that best supports transparency, accountability, and public participation. This includes all agency actions related to the creation, retention, preservation, access, and distribution of government data. It may be necessary to standardize implementation of the Official Records Act across all agencies to ensure records are archived and not discarded.

2) We recommend state agencies take full advantage of digital tools to improve documentation of decisions, reduce the need for Data Practices Act (DPA) requests, and reduce agency costs when DPA requests are made. We recommend that documents be posted online as a matter of routine so that they are available to the public to facilitate public review. For example, permits should be posted online and searchable, at a minimum, by subject, facility name, and permit number.

3) We recommend all documents pertaining to government advisory task forces, studies, policy actions, and other functions including, but not limited to, applications, technical materials, drafts, research, and intragovernmental communications be preserved in their entirety and easily accessible to the public through online search functions.

4) We recommend all rulemaking documents including, but not limited to, all draft and final technical support documents, statements of need, exhibits, public comments, and decision documents be preserved in their entirety and easily accessible to the public through online search functions.

5) We recommend public health exposure testing data including, but not limited to, results of testing of mercury in fish and monitoring of air quality near emission sources be preserved in their entirety and easily accessible to the public through online search functions.

6) We recommend all notes, drafts, slides, and presentations from meetings, phone conferences, virtual meetings, agendas, and internal/external review of documents, including those created or shared in the chat function of virtual meetings, be preserved electronically.

7) We recommend that all DPA requests be completed within thirty days, that the delivery time of all DPA requests be tracked, and that government data be maintained in systems that facilitate easy retrieval.

8) We recommend that agencies cease imposing unreasonable fees for DPA requests and cease imposing additional requirements for DPA requests beyond those explicitly contained in statute. For example, it is not acceptable for an agency to respond to only one DPA request at a time per organization or individual.

9) We recommend that the EQB establish a standing committee that will focus on government transparency and public collaboration. This standing committee would be composed of representatives from Minnesota's conservation/environmental community.

We appreciate this opportunity to submit written testimony and look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn Anderson, Tamarack Water Alliance, Volunteer

Lori Cox, Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC, Owner

Lydia DeGross, Minnesotan

Barry Drazkowski, Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, Retired

Izaak Walton League of America, Minnesota Division, Will Dilg Chapter, Member

Hudson Kingston, Clean Up the River Environment, Legal Director

Howard Markus, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Research Scientist, Retired

Willis Mattison, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Retired

Izaak Walton League of America, Minnesota Division, Prairie Woods Chapter, Member

Tee McClenty, MN350, Executive Director

Margot Monson, Pollinator Friendly Alliance, Board of Directors

Lois Norrgard, Izaak Walton League of America, Minnesota Division, MN Valley Chapter, Member

Sierra Club North Star Chapter Executive Committee, Member

Max Sano, Beyond Pesticides, Organic Program Associate

Verlynn Schmalle, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Chief Financial Officer, Retired

Laurie Schneider, Pollinator Friendly Alliance, Executive Director

Minnesota Environmental Partnership, Member

John Siekmeier, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Retired

Izaak Walton League of America, Minnesota Division, Jaques Chapter, Member

Craig Sterle, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Retired

Izaak Walton League of America, Minnesota Division, W. J. McCabe Chapter, Member