

October 2025 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, October 15 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.

Public comment opportunities at EQB meetings

EQB encourages public engagement and appreciates the opportunity to build shared understanding with members of the public. There are multiple ways to engage with staff and board members. One important way is to provide public comment at a board meeting.

The public comment period(s) at a board meeting provide an opportunity for members of the public to inform the board about their views related to the specific item under discussion or something related to the board's purview or authority. Tips for providing comments:

- Ensure that your comments are relevant and specific to the topic you are addressing.
- Say what you want the board to know or consider in moving forward with a piece of work.
- Identify a specific action that you want the Board to take.

If you have a question for the board or EQB staff, it will be noted by staff who will get back to you at a later time. This ensures that we have enough time at a meeting for all commenters to provide input to the board and that your questions can be fully considered.

Oral public comment



At each meeting, the agenda will show when the board will accept oral public comment. The chair will use their discretion to direct public comment and ensure the board's ability to effectively conduct business.

Procedure for giving oral public comment:

- **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.
- When the chairperson calls on you to speak:
 - Introduce yourself before beginning your comment.
 - Please keep your remarks to the agenda item at hand.
 - Please be respectful of board members, staff, and other meeting participants. The chair, vice-chair, or other presiding officer will not tolerate personal attacks.
- The chairperson may limit commenters' time for remarks to ensure there is equal opportunity for the public to comment. Generally, your remarks will be limited to two (2) minutes.
- The chairperson may discontinue a commenter's time to speak if the comments are not reasonably related to the agenda item at hand.

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, and attach them to the public record. Any written comments received after this deadline will be included in the next meeting packet.

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 September 17, 2025, Environmental Quality Board meeting on packet page 5
- Preliminary agenda for the October 15, 2025, Environmental Quality Board meeting

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

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

4. Office of Enterprise Sustainability annual update (1:20 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 Administration

5. Foundational information on data centers, part 1 (1:50 pm)

Type of item: Informational

Summary: Data centers house IT infrastructure to run and deliver computing applications and services. As people and the economy increasingly rely on cloud-based data storage and computing, including AI, there is increasing demand for the services provided by data centers, and there are proposals being made to locate larger data centers in Minnesota. In siting and developing data centers, there is a particular need to look at the facilities' energy and water requirements.

Depending on any given facility's size and energy and water needs, data centers may be subject to multiple environmental review and regulatory requirements. This meeting will focus, at a high level, on potential environmental review and energy regulatory considerations related to data centers.

- DEED staff will provide an overview of the development of data centers in Minnesota
- EQB staff will provide an overview of environmental review under Minn. R. 4410
- PUC and Commerce staff will provide an overview of permitting and review under energy statutes (Minn. Stat. 216B and Minn. Stat. 216I)
- MPCA staff will provide a brief overview of considerations for air permitting
- Commerce and DEED staff will provide an update on 2025 legislation

At the November meeting we will discuss environmental review and regulatory considerations related to water.

Outcome: The staff provide foundational information about data centers, helping Board members increase their understanding of the issue. This information will support future discussion about potential work for the EQB, focused around two of our key outcomes – to support program development on priority and emerging environmental issues and to maintain and improve Minnesota’s environmental review program.

Presenters:

- EQB: Catherine Neuschler, Sarah Lerohl
- DEED: Chet Bodin
- PUC: Mike Bull, Jenna Ness
- Commerce: Dr. Sydnie Lieb
- MPCA: Richard Cordes

Public comment: EQB will take public comment specifically on this item. Commenters may make recommendations to the Board on issues the Board should further explore or consider taking action on; these recommendations should be on issues related to the Board’s specific role and authorities. (Such as the Board’s general authority over environmental review procedures under Minn. R. 4410. Note that EQB does not oversee RGU work or decisions on specific projects or environmental review documents.)

6. Closing and adjournment (3:50 pm)

September 2025 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 | 1:00-4:00 p.m. | 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155, lower level conference room south and online via Teams.

Minutes

1. Welcome and roll call

Vice Chair Nick Martin called the meeting to order and then ordered a recess in order to achieve a quorum.

After a recess of approximately half an hour, Chair Nancy Daubenger called to order the regular meeting of the Environmental Quality Board.

Members present: Joseph Bauerkemper, Nancy Daubenger, Tamar Gronvall, Rylee Hince, Katrina Kessler, Nicholas Martin, Sarah Strommen, Todd Holman, Daniel Katzenberger, Paul Nelson, Thom Petersen, Angie Smith

Members excused: Grace Arnold, Peter Bakken, Ed Brands, Brooke Cunningham, Matt Varilek, Charles Zelle

Proxies present: Myra Kunas (for Cunningham), Jamie MacAlister (for Arnold), Kevin McKinnon (for Varilek)

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

Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from August 20, 2025, Environmental Quality Board meeting, as revised
- Proposed agenda for September 17, 2025, Environmental Quality Board meeting

Motion: Board Member Petersen moved to approve the revised meeting minutes and the consent agenda; Board Member Katzenberger seconded.

In favor: Bauerkemper, Daubenger, Gronvall, Hince, Holman, Katzenberger, Martin, Nelson, Petersen, Smith, Strommen

Opposed: none

Excused: Arnold, Bakken, Brands, Cunningham, Kessler, Varilek

2. Executive Director's report

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

- 2025 Groundwater Report: Has been submitted and is posted on the EQB website.
- Pollinator engagement: Thanks to EQB staff Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno for driving EQB's engagement with the public on pollinators in the past few weeks. EQB staff talked to close to 1500 people between pollinator day at the State Fair and the Minneapolis Monarch Festival, thanks to all the EQB and other agency staff who helped out.
- Data centers: The board had a lot of discussion about data centers at the last meeting, and staff are working on getting a meeting set up to share more information with the board.
- Executive Director Events
 - Annual Government to Government climate forum on September 18.
 - Tribal training on September 25-26. Reminder to public board members who have not attended but would like to attend to inform the executive director.
 - Minnesota Agriculture and Food Economy tour on September 29-30.
- Staffing: Congratulations to Colleen Hetzel, who will be leaving EQB in early October to take on a supervisor role at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The EQB Environmental Review Program Director job will be posted through September 24.

3. Climate Action Framework update

Presenter: Kate Knuth – Climate Director, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)

Type of item: Informational

Summary: The 2022 Climate Action Framework set a vision for how Minnesota can address and prepare for climate change. It included a set of actions to achieve the long-term goal of a carbon-neutral, resilient, and equitable future for Minnesota. This framework has been a valuable communication tool and resource for collaboration and prioritization.

Though we have made significant progress on the original framework, we must accelerate the pace and scale of our climate actions to effectively reach our goals to mitigate the state's greenhouse gas emissions. Minnesota is taking the opportunity to update the Climate Action Framework in 2025 to provide more specific, actionable steps to guide climate action at the necessary pace and scale.

The presenter provided an overview of the process of updating the Climate Action Framework, including the consideration of new climate goals and actions; modeling; and upcoming opportunities for public feedback.

Discussion:

- The Government-to-Government Forum on September 18 aims to solidify shared commitments with the Tribal governments around climate action work and to lift up their priorities and their leadership in that space. The Forum agenda is a lot of working sessions with Tribal leaders and

state leaders towards that end, and that group will receive similar CAF updates. We are grateful for the leadership of Minnesota's Tribal nations and for the partnership that shows up in the renewed climate action framework and in the previous version.

- A big takeaway from creating the report is that many Minnesotans want to see the state leading on climate change issues.
- There is disagreement and tension around how to go about solving various climate issues, but there is lots of opportunity because with a lot of passion you have a lot of people who are energized to make things happen.
- Transportation goals: plans to reduce vehicle miles traveled by 20% per capita by 2050.
- Buildings:
 - A lot of work focused on housing, both multi-family as well as individual homes and weatherization.
 - There's a lot of interest in thermal energy or geothermal energy thermal energy networks. The state passed significant building code upgrades within the last couple of years, so achieving those and implementing those will be important for new buildings and upgraded buildings.
 - Efficient and resilient building - recognizing the goal of having Minnesotans safe in their homes and prepared for climate change in energy as well as resilience to more extreme weather.

Public comment: There were no comments.

Outcome: The Board was informed about the process and progress in updating Minnesota's Climate Action Framework.

4. Energy Rulemaking Notice approval

Presenter: Colleen Hetzel – Director Environmental Review Program, EQB

Type of item: Decision

Summary: The 2024 legislature directed EQB to revise the provisions of Minn. R. 4410 to conform with legislative changes, including the creation of the Minnesota Energy Infrastructure Permitting Act and related statutes governing the environmental review of certain energy projects.

EQB staff have developed and drafted potential revisions and recommend that the Board approve moving forward to propose the rules.

Public comment:

- Renee Keezer, Water Resources Manager for the White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe: Questioned if the EQB plans to provide the energy rulemaking information to the Minnesota Tribal Environmental Committee (MNTEC)
 - Response: EQB discussed this information at MNTEC on December 13, 2024, February 13, 2025, and at a meeting in June where EQB presented the conforming changes in detail. EQB also sent an annual consultation letter to all the Tribes which discussed the information and offered and invited consultation on any items.

Motion: Board Member Kessler moved to adopt the resolution approving the energy rulemaking notice revisions. Board Member Katzenberger seconded.

In favor: Bauerkemper, Daubenberger, Gronvall, Hince, Holman, Katzenberger, Kessler, Nelson, Petersen, Smith, Strommen

Opposed: none

Abstained: Martin

Excused: Arnold, Bakken, Brands, Cunningham, Varilek

Outcome: The Board authorized the Executive Director to commence the formal rulemaking process for the proposed draft amendments to Minnesota Rules 4410 by adopting the resolution.

5. Public Comment

There were no comments.

6. Closing and adjournment

Having reached the end of the agenda, the Chair asked if there was any further business.

Adjournment:

With no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.