



520 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4194

## MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

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Wednesday, July 18, 2012

**Meeting Location: MPCA Board Room  
St. Paul, Minnesota  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

### ANNOTATED AGENDA

#### General

This month's meeting will take place in the MPCA Board Room at 520 Lafayette Road in St. Paul. The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. Staff will be available for briefing and questions at 12:30 p.m.

#### **I. \*Adoption of Consent Agenda**

Proposed Agenda for July 18, 2012, Board Meeting  
June 20, 2012 Meeting Minutes

#### **II. Introductions**

#### **III. Chair's Report**

#### **IV. Executive Director's Report**

#### **V. Executive Order 11-32 Project Updates**

#### Presenters

- Environmental Review Improvement  
Charlie Peterson, Minnesota Management and Budget  
(651-259-3812)  
  
Randall Doneen, Department of Natural Resources  
(651-259-5156)
- Environmental Congress  
Ellen Anderson, Senior Advisor to the Governor  
(651-201-6173)
- Improved Environmental Governance and Coordination  
Environment and Energy Report Card  
Jeff Smyser  
(651-757-2279)

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*\* Items requiring discussion may be removed from the Consent Agenda*

**Materials enclosed:**

None

**Issue before the Board:**

The Board will hear progress reports from the interagency core team leaders and staff, and will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide further direction.

**Background:**

Considerable progress has been made by all the project teams:

- Focus groups have recently been completed for the Environmental Review Improvement project among local government RGUs, project proposers, environmental/conservation/citizen groups, academia/experts, and state agency environmental review staff. The presentation will overview the focus groups and themes that emerged. It will also describe the process going forward.
- Plans and a budget are being finalized for the Environmental Congress project for listening sessions in late November and early December 2012. It is expected that EQB Board Members will attend, and staff arranging the Listening Sessions need to know as soon as possible if board members have conflicts with the planned Listening Session dates. Proposed venues for the culminating Environmental Congress event in St. Paul in February 2013 have been developed with cost information.
- Brief overviews will be given on progress and future work for the Improved Environmental Governance and Coordination and Environment and Energy Report Card projects.

**VI. Frac Sand Mining and Generic Environmental Impact Statement  
Background Presentations**

**Presenters:** Heather Arends, DNR  
(651-259-5376)

Jeff Hedman, MPCA  
(651-757-2416)

Hillary Carpenter, MDH  
(651-201-4895)

Dave Christianson, MnDOT  
(651-366-3710)

Kate Frantz, EQB  
(651-757-2370)

**Materials enclosed:**

- Petition for moratorium and GEIS dated June 28, 2012
- Letter from Senator John Howe (R-Red Wing) dated July 9, 2012
- Letter from Jody McIlrath, Florence Township, dated June 24, 2012
- Minn. Rules Part 4410.3800, Generic EIS (excerpt Environmental Review Rules)

**Issue before the Board:**

The EQB received presentations at its June meeting from Kristen Eide-Tollefson, Florence Township, Bill Neuman, St. Croix Scenic Coalition, and Sigurd Anderson, Frac Sand Mining Study Group, expressing environmental concerns regarding silica sand mining (frac sand mining) in central and southeast Minnesota, and stating an intent to petition the EQB for conduct of a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS). The petition is anticipated in early August. Additionally, the EQB and Governor have received a petition and two letters of request for a GEIS, including a letter from Senator John Howe (R-Red Wing).

Staff proposes the Board discuss the potential for a GEIS and receive testimony at its August meeting. The purpose of the presentation is to provide the EQB with background information on silica sand resources in Minnesota, the characteristics, extent, and impacts of silica sand mining, and nature, criteria, and effect of GEISs.

Due to time constraints, staff proposes the Board take no testimony at the July meeting.

**Background:**

The GEIS is a substitute method of environmental review provided for in part 4410.3800 of the Environmental Review Rules. Two GEISs have been conducted under this authority: on timber harvest (1994) and animal agriculture (2002). Additionally, the EQB conducted a regional copper-nickel study in 1979.

A GEIS may be ordered by the EQB to study types of projects not adequately reviewed on a case-by-case basis (i.e., through project-specific EAWs and EISs). The EQB may be responsible for conduct of the GEIS or the EQB may designate another governmental unit. The EQB may initiate the GEIS, or the public can make a request. Such a public request may be made by a governmental unit or any person. There is no specified form or process for making a public request.

The rule provides the EQB with criteria for determining the need for a GEIS.

Preparation of a GEIS neither exempts specific activities from project-specific environmental review (EAWs or EISs), nor does it preclude the undertaking or completion of a specific project whose impacts are considered in a GEIS. This latter point is relevant to the petition requesting a moratorium on frac-sand mining. The EQB does not have authority to impose such a moratorium.

**VII. Adjourn**