Overview of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB)
Presented By: Will Seuffert, Executive Director, EQB
MSBA
November 2013
The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) draws together the Governor’s Office, five citizens, and the heads of nine state agencies to coordinate the development of environmental policy and plans, and ensure adequate review of proposed projects that would significantly influence Minnesota’s environment and development.
WHEREAS, it is a necessity in state government to provide continuous, comprehensive evaluation of the quality of the environment; and,

WHEREAS, because of the multitude of institutions, public and private, that variously affect the quality of our air, water, and land resources, no single state department or agency exerts a profound influence in environmental planning; and,

WHEREAS, it is mandatory to establish an interdepartmental advisory structure to consider the policy and planning of the State of Minnesota on environmental matters;
Environmental Quality Board

- Governor’s representative

- Nine Agency Commissioners
  - Administration
  - Agriculture
  - Commerce
  - Employment & Economic Development
  - Health
  - Natural Resources
  - Pollution Control
  - Transportation
  - Water & Soil Resources

- Five Citizen Members

- Metropolitan Council
EQB Mission

The Board’s mission is to ...

- Investigate environmental issues that cut across agency interests
- Coordinate state plans and policy
- Ensure compliance with state environmental policy
- Engage Minnesotans
MS 103A, 103B, 116C and 116D provide for the Environmental Quality Board to:

- administer the statewide environmental review program;
- coordinate environmental policy, agencies and programs;
- develop the state water plan and water policy reports;
- study environmental issues;
- convene environmental congresses; and
- advise the governor and the legislature.
Environmental Review
Program Basics

- Established by MEPA – Minn. Stat. §116D.04
- Rulemaking and coordinating authority assigned to Environmental Quality Board
- ER rules (Minn. Rules, chapter 4410) prescribe what projects need review and how review is to be done
- EQB provides standard forms, guidance documents, and consultation and advice
- Applies to projects that “may have potential for significant environmental effects”
- Intended to disclose information through a systematic, public process
- Works in conjunction with permits and other approvals
EQB was established in 1973 as the state’s environmental coordinating body.

Over the last 40 years it has undertaken a broad range of environmental studies, barge fleeting on the Mississippi River, animal agriculture, forestry, urban development, copper-nickel mining, genetically modified organisms, land use management, water management, and sustainable development.

- 1980 (decentralization of environmental review),
- 1983 (addition of water planning duties),
- 1987 (environmental review and siting requirements for large natural gas and petroleum product pipelines),
**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

- 1991 (energy and environment strategy reporting),
- 1995 (siting of large wind energy conversion systems),
- 2003 (elimination of the Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning, which provided administrative and staff support to the EQB), and
- 2005 (transfer of energy facilities siting to the Department of Commerce and the Public Utilities Commission).
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EQB in Recent Years

- 2011 Legislative Session
- Administrative Reorganization
- Executive Order 11-32
- Citizen Forums
- Environmental Congress
- GICD
- 2013 Session
- Silica Sand…
Directing the Work of the Environmental Quality Board

Executive Order No. 11-32

WHEREAS, the EOB is directed by law to:

1. Determine which environmental problems of statewide concern to state government shall be subject to long-range study and review, and to which such problems are commonly referred by state, federal, and local governments.

2. Review and make recommendations for improvement of state agencies and programs in relation to the public welfare and the environment.

3. Conduct studies and make recommendations for the betterment of the environment, as defined in section 116C.01, in relation to the public welfare, for the health, safety, and comfort of the people, and for the protection and conservation of natural resources.

4. Advise the Governor, legislative committees, and other agencies of state government on problems of statewide concern relating to the environment.

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EOB) is composed of members appointed by the Governor to serve terms of four years.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordered by the Governor of the State of Minnesota, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and applicable statutes to hereby issue this Executive Order:

The Governor, by virtue of the authority vested in him by the Constitution and applicable statutes, hereby directs the members of the Environmental Quality Board (EOB) to:

1. Conduct studies and make recommendations for the betterment of the environment, as defined in section 116C.01, in relation to the public welfare, for the health, safety, and comfort of the people, and for the protection and conservation of natural resources.

2. Advise the Governor, legislative committees, and other agencies of state government on problems of statewide concern relating to the environment.

All members of the EOB are hereby authorized to call meetings of the EOB as required by law to fulfill the duties and responsibilities assigned to them by this Executive Order.

Signed...

Mark Dayton
Governor

Executive Order No. 11-32

November 30, 2011

STATE OF MINNESOTA

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

MARK DAYTON
Governor
Executive Order 11-32

- Develop recommendations on how to improve the environmental review process,
- Evaluate and make recommendations for improved environmental governance and coordination,
- Prepare an environment and energy report card,
- Host an environmental congress.

Public engagement was a critical part of the entire process.
November 27th: Bloomington
~450 attendees

November 28th: Duluth
~200 attendees

November 27th: Rochester
~200 attendees

December 14th: Moorhead
~120 attendees

December 12th: St. Cloud
~225 attendees

December 10th: Worthington
~70 attendees
March 15, 2013
Governors Institute on Community Design (GICD)

- **GICD mission:** to assist governors and their cabinets and staffs as they seek to guide growth and development in their states.

- **May 2, 2013 workshop**

- **Establish the EQB as the central point for implementing and tracking the State’s climate change efforts**

- **Manage across all the various regulations and competing priorities to have more effective and efficient management of water resources**
• 2013 Environment Budget Bill:
  • Sec. 91. develop model standards and criteria
  • Sec. 91. assemble silica sand technical assistance team
  • Sec. 93. ordinance and permit library
  • Sec. 105. amend rules for environmental review

• Multi-facility EIS
Questions?
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