

**Activity Description**

The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) draws together the Governor's Office, five citizens, and the heads of nine state agencies in order to coordinate the development of environmental policy and plans, and review proposed projects that would significantly influence Minnesota's environment and development. Minnesota Statutes, Chapters 103A, 103B, 116C and 116D provide for the Environmental Quality Board to:

- ◆ ensure compliance with state environmental policy;
- ◆ oversee the environmental review process;
- ◆ coordinate environmental 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.

**Population Served**

EQB represents the long-term environmental and economic interest of all Minnesota citizens, including those involved with or affected by development requiring environmental review, and those interested in the coordination of environmental policy and sustainable management of the state's water resources.

**Services Provided**

EQB provides the public with an accessible forum for raising and discussing state environmental policies and decisions. EQB oversees the statewide environmental review program (M.S. 116D.04-.06); including the preparation of environmental impact statements, environmental assessment worksheets, alternative urban area wide reviews, and generic environmental impact statements. The board coordinates state water planning activities and develops the state water plan and water policy reports for the governor and legislature (M.S. 103A.204, 103A.43, and 103B.151). The board also has authority concerning the release of genetically modified organisms (M.S. 116C.91-.98), the designation of state critical areas (M.S. 116G), the study of significant interagency environmental issues (M.S. 116C.04), the convening of environmental congresses to exchange information and ideas about environmental improvement (M.S. 116C.04), and development of an energy and environment strategy report (M.S. 116D.10-11).

**Historical Perspective**

EQB was established in 1973 as the state's environmental coordinating body. Over the last 30 years it has undertaken a broad range of environmental studies, from barge fleeing on the Mississippi River to animal agriculture, forestry, urban development, copper-nickel mining, genetically modified organisms, land use management, water management, and sustainable development. Major changes came to board programs in 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), 1991 (energy and environment strategy reporting), 1995 (siting of large wind energy conversion systems), and 2005 (transfer of energy facilities siting to the Department of Commerce and the Public Utilities Commission). The Department of Administration provides the board with the staff necessary to carry out its statutory responsibilities.

**Activity at a Glance**

In FY 2007 and 2008, EQB:

- ◆ Proposed rule revisions to streamline and clarify environmental review in Minnesota;
- ◆ Published new online guidance documents for citizens, local government, and consultants;
- ◆ Published 52 issues of the EQB Monitor;
- ◆ Addressed 2,000 calls for technical assistance;
- ◆ Processed 65 citizen petitions, 267 environmental assessment worksheets, 41 alternative urban area wide reviews, and 30 environmental impact statements; and
- ◆ Adopted two major reports on Minnesota's water resources, addressing sustainability of the state's water supplies and the need for clean water funding.

**Key Program Goals**

EQB's broad focus on coordinating state involvement in environment and development activities supports the environmental cluster of Minnesota Milestones goals—*Minnesotans will conserve natural resources to give future generations a healthy environment and a strong economy; improve the quality of the air, water and earth; restore and maintain healthy ecosystems that support diverse plants and wildlife; and have opportunities to enjoy the state's natural resources.*

Goals for the coming biennium are to:

- ◆ complete a state water plan that sets the agenda for the next ten years of water management in Minnesota;
- ◆ introduce a framework for the sustainable allocation of water supplies that meets the long-term needs of Minnesotans;
- ◆ develop an energy and environment strategy report that helps the public understand state efforts and that addresses land use aspects of climate change;
- ◆ provide citizens and local governments the assistance they need to participate in meaningful environmental review; and
- ◆ adopt rule changes that streamline and clarify environmental review in Minnesota.

**Key Measures**

- ◆ Adoption and publication of:
  - ⇒ a new state water plan;
  - ⇒ a water allocation framework;
  - ⇒ an energy and environment strategy report; and
  - ⇒ a revised environmental review rule.
- ◆ Publication of monthly issues of the EQB Monitor;
- ◆ Timely assistance to citizens and local governments (measured by client surveys);
- ◆ Stakeholder satisfaction with EQB products and services (measured by client surveys).

**Activity Funding**

EQB programs are supported by a general fund appropriation.

**Contact**

Director

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[www.eqb.state.mn.us](http://www.eqb.state.mn.us)

**ADMINISTRATION DEPT**

**Program: GOVT AND CITIZEN SERVICES**

Activity: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Budget Activity Summary

| <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>            |                |               |                      |               |                 |
|--|----------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
|  | <b>Current</b> |               | <b>Forecast Base</b> |               | <b>Biennium</b> |
|  | <b>FY2008</b>  | <b>FY2009</b> | <b>FY2010</b>        | <b>FY2011</b> | <b>2010-11</b>  |
| <b><u>Expenditures by Fund</u></b>     |                |               |                      |               |                 |
| Direct Appropriations                  |                |               |                      |               |                 |
| General                                | 686            | 618           | 553                  | 553           | 1,106           |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>686</b>     | <b>618</b>    | <b>553</b>           | <b>553</b>    | <b>1,106</b>    |
| <b><u>Expenditures by Category</u></b> |                |               |                      |               |                 |
| Total Compensation                     | 628            | 503           | 495                  | 502           | 997             |
| Other Operating Expenses               | 58             | 115           | 65                   | 58            | 123             |
| Transfers                              | 0              | 0             | (7)                  | (7)           | (14)            |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>686</b>     | <b>618</b>    | <b>553</b>           | <b>553</b>    | <b>1,106</b>    |
| <b>Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)</b>      | <b>6.7</b>     | <b>5.5</b>    | <b>5.2</b>           | <b>5.1</b>    |                 |