

**Activity at a Glance**

In FY 2009 and 2010

- Rules revised to streamline and clarify environmental review in Minnesota
- Electronically published the *EQB Monitor* bi-weekly
- Addressed 1,525 calls for technical assistance
- Processed 22 citizen petitions, 180 environmental assessment worksheets, 27 alternative urban area wide reviews, and 36 environmental impact statements
- Adopted water resources report, addressing sustainability of state water supplies
- Developed an innovative Geographic Information System (GIS) web tool to help prospective water users evaluate impacts
- Contributed to four state reports on water sustainability
- Initiated collaborations to streamline state mandates for local land and water planning and assist local governments
- Convened a committee to identify future steps for fulfilling the board's environmental policy planning and coordination mandates.

**Activity Description**

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. M.S. Chapters 103A, 103B, 116C, and 116D provide for the Environmental Quality Board to:

- Administer the statewide environmental review program
- Coordinate state environmental policies and programs
- Develop the state water plan and water policy reports
- Study environmental issues
- Convene environmental congresses
- Advise the governor and the legislature

EQB staff is a unit within the Office of Geographic and Demographic Analysis.

**Population Served**

EQB serves executive branch agencies, the legislature, and Minnesota's citizens, focusing on those involved with or affected by development, and those interested in coordinated environmental policy and sustainable management of the state's natural resources.

**Services Provided**

EQB provides a public forum for discussing state environmental policies and decisions. EQB writes rules and provides guidance about the statewide environmental review program (M.S. 116D.04-.06), including 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. Chapter 116G), the study of 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**

The EQB was established in 1973 as the state's environmental coordinating body. Since then, it has undertaken a broad range of environmental studies, including Mississippi River barge fleetings, animal agriculture, forestry, urban development, copper-nickel mining, genetically modified organisms, land use management, water management, and sustainable development. Major changes to board programs occurred 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).

**Key Activity Goals & Measures****Minnesota Milestones Statewide Goals – Supports Environmental Cluster**

(<http://server.admin.state.mn.us/mm/goal.html>)

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.*

Goal 1) Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental review for project proposers, responsible governmental units, and the general public.

Measure: Adoption of improved environmental review forms and guidance. The 2010 legislature mandated the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and EQB periodically examine environmental review and customize forms used for certain types of projects. EQB staff and member agencies have initiated a comprehensive review of forms and guidance typically used in environmental review with the objective of improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Goal 2) Move toward sustainable water management.

Measure: Adoption and initial implementation of decadal state water plan in 2010. Together with the University of Minnesota's Water Sustainability Framework and Clean Water Council recommendations, this plan will articulate state agency directions for the coming decade.

Measure: Substantial progress toward development of a decision support system for the Minnesota River Basin. The EQB is coordinating nonfederal partners and co-leading a state-US Army Corps of Engineers project to identify opportunities to restore ecosystem and economic vitality and water quality in the basin.

Goal 3) Streamline mandates for local land and water planning and integrate assistance to local governments.

Measure: Implementation of measures that streamline local government implementation of state land and water planning requirements, provide assistance and foster local-state partnerships. The EQB has convened interagency working groups to study and recommend improvements.

Goal 4) Undertake and participate in important environmental policy strategic planning and coordination.

Measure: The number of environmental policy strategic planning and coordination efforts that the EQB leads, or in which it participates. The EQB has led major efforts in recent years and has convened a committee of EQB citizen members to identify future actions for continuing to fulfill EQB's mandates. In addition to EQB-led efforts, participation by EQB staff in efforts led by other agencies and entities helps ensure that environmental policy-making is coordinated, comprehensive, and properly considers long-term implications.

	<b>Efforts Led</b>	<b>EQB Participation</b>
FY 2006-07	7	14
FY 2008-09	5	17
FY 2010-11	9	15

**Activity Funding**

EQB programs are supported by a general fund appropriation.

**Contact**

Executive Director

Phone: (651) 201-2462

Web site: <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>					
	Current		Governor's Recomm.		Biennium
	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	2012-13
<b><u>Expenditures by Fund</u></b>					
<b>Direct Appropriations</b>					
General	520	584	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Expenditures by Category</u></b>					
Total Compensation	457	482	0	0	0
Other Operating Expenses	63	102	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	