

EQB Policy | 2025

Petitions

Background

The Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) says that environmental quality is critically important to our welfare. It recognizes that human activity has a profound and often adverse impact on the environment. MEPA established Minnesota's environmental review process, to help us understand and address the significant environmental issues of a proposed action.

MEPA outlines a way for members of the public to petition for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). An EAW contains information on potential impacts and the review process makes it available to governmental units and citizens early in the decision-making process. Environmental review does not approve or deny a project; it can inform permitting decisions.

Policy Proposal

MEPA says a valid petition must be signed by no less than 100 individuals that reside or own property in Minnesota. This proposal would revise Minn. Stat. 116D.04 to clarify that Tribal Governments – defined by Minn. Stat. 10.65 – may petition for an environmental assessment worksheet without gathering 100 signatures.

Why this matters

This change supports Tribal sovereignty, recognizing that Tribal governments act on behalf of their citizens. It would clarify that Tribal governments can make a petition by going through their own internal decision-making procedures. This idea comes directly from EQB's engagement with Tribal environmental staff.

The language update will also make processing petitions more efficient by clarifying (as is already specified in Minn. R. 4410.1100) that the EQB chair can delegate the administrative task of processing petitions to the EQB staff.

When is environmental review required?

When a project has potential or may have the potential for significant environmental effects.

Mandatory

Initiated by RGU (including petitions), EQB or project proposer.

Discretionary

Some types of projects are exempt from environmental review requirements.

Exemptions

Contact

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