

Wisconsin Small Business Environmental Council Guidelines

Purpose

The Small Business Environmental Council (SBEC) was created through statutory authority under s. 560.11, Wis. Stat. in 1993. The statutes charge the SBEC with the following:

- Advise Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on the difficulties experienced by small businesses when complying with environmental regulations.
- Provide other advice to DNR on ways to assist small businesses to comply with state and federal environmental regulations.
- Determine the impact and severity of environmental regulations and enforcement against small businesses.
- Review Small Business Clean Air Assistance Program (SBCAAP) informational materials to ensure they are understandable by small businesses.
- Advise DNR on effectiveness of SBCAAP.

These activities are carried out through bimonthly meetings organized by SBCAAP staff.

Members

Wisconsin Statutes establish how the members to SBEC are appointed. The statutes require seven members be appointed as representatives of the general public (3) and owners of small businesses (4). The Governor's office, and the majority and minority leaders of both State Senate and Assembly will appoint these seven members.

Two additional members represent the Departments of Commerce, which houses the SBCAAP staff, and Natural Resources (DNR), which provides the funding for the SBCAAP. The Secretary's of each state agency shall appoint their respective representatives.

Each of the members serves a three-year term. When a term is about to expire, the council may agree to suggest to the appointing body that the incumbent be allowed to extend their membership through another term. Appointment letters will be sent to the appointing body through the office of the Secretary of Commerce. The council will send follow up letters encouraging action by the appointing body. When a vacant position exists, the council may provide names of candidates for appointment.

Officers

After all those with interest have been allowed to volunteer and a list is compiled for discussion, the council will decide on chair and vice-chair through consensus or, if lacking consensus through majority vote. Once the council has chosen the initial chair, the vice-chair succeeds the chair and a new vice-chair will be selected each year unless the council members elect to extend the term of the current officers. The current chair shall be the initial recipient of indications from those interested in becoming candidates for vice-chair. Each meeting in May or June shall include a block of time to make this decision for the coming year. The following meeting held in July or August would be the one in which the newly appointed chair and vice-chair shall take office. If a vacancy in either the chair or vice-chair occurs, the council will appoint an existing member to fulfill the term.

The term for the chair position shall be a one-year term, which was preceded by a one-year term as vice-chair unless extended by council members. Chair responsibilities include:

- Where a signature on a letter from the council is required the chair shall sign the letter, unless it pertains to the chair's position/appointment at which time the vice-chair shall sign.
- The chair shall assist SBCAAP staff with drafting Council's Corner articles, follow-up appointment letters, letters of recommendation to Governor or legislators or regulatory agencies.
- The chair will discuss agenda items with SBCAAP staff in advance of the meetings to ensure agreement on key issues of discussion.
- Where SBCAAP staff role is as facilitator or secretary for council meetings, concerned with keeping notes and managing the agenda timely, the chair will assist in keeping the content of discussions pertinent to the issue at hand.
- Bring issues to the council from the National Compliance Advisory Panel (CAP) - as brought to chair's attention by Region V CAP representative (may or may not be a member of our council) - and provide input on those issues as needed.
- May represent council through presentations to outside groups about the purpose and nature of the council.

The vice-chair shall succeed the chair as indicated above. Whenever the chair is unavailable for any of their responsibilities as listed above, the vice-chair will fill-in as much as possible.

Administration

SBCAAP staff is responsible for arranging logistics for all council meetings. Accommodations must be sufficient to allow roundtable discussion to take place with minimal outside noise or distractions and that presentations/slide shows will be easy to view if provided. Staff will compile agenda items for each meeting and arrange for speakers as needed. Agenda items will be discussed with chair (or vice-chair as necessary) prior to meeting to obtain agreement on key points to be discussed. Details on logistics and agenda items shall be provided to council members at least one week in advance of meeting.

Meetings

Each member shall make every effort to attend all council meetings. SBCAAP staff will be notified as soon as a member knows they will be unable to attend a meeting. Staff will notify chair of attendance responses via the fax-back form provided with logistics and agenda. If the conflict arises after 7 am on the day of the meeting and faxing the form is not possible, the member shall contact staff and provide notice that they are unable to attend the meeting (608/264-6153 or 608/267-9214).

Meetings shall be scheduled to minimize conflicts, and maximize member's attendance. If any member misses half of the scheduled meetings within a fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) they shall be asked to reconsider their membership. The council shall take into account extenuating circumstances such as health or other conflicts that could not be avoided.

Decision-making Process and Voting

The council's preferred method for making decisions is consensus. Where consensus does not appear possible, a vote may be taken. A quorum of 4 out of the 7 business representative members must be present to vote. Each business member has 1 vote; agency members do not vote. In the event of a tie vote no action will be taken on the issue until more business members are present to break the tie. If the tie is not broken, the matter will be carried over to the next meeting for further consideration. Business members not attending the meeting may vote by proxy given to the chair. If the vote stays as a tie, members will be given an opportunity to express their opinion on the issue, as individuals.

Additional Member Responsibilities or Activities

Items that have been suggested as possible extensions of the council members' responsibilities are:

- Represent the council through presentations of the purpose and activities of the council, etc. to business groups in the member's community or as requested.
- Mentor or provide referrals (to SBCAAP, WisCon, SHWEC, other assistance providers, etc.) to businesses in need of assistance within the member's community or as requested.
- Communicate with member's respective appointing bodies (Governor's office, etc.) regarding activities of the council. (Staff may create an annual report format for use by council members in communication with any outside group(s) they choose.)
- Encourage each member to become active in small business activities (i.e., local Chambers) in the member's community. Periodically report on these activities to the Council.