

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
Lansing, Michigan
Thursday, December 10, 2009, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Members in attendance: Jon Allan, Sandra Batie, Steve Chester, Brad Garmon, Jeffrey Haynes, Chuck Hersey, Heidi McKenzie, Mindy Koch, Del Rector, David Rinard, Raymond Scott, Mike Shriberg, Andy Such, Gildo Tori, and Paul Zugger.

DEQ Staff in attendance: Frank Baldwin, Liz Browne, George Bruchmann, Jim Cleland, Bill Creal, Bryce Feighner, Lynn Fiedler, Kim Fish, James Kasprzak, Lynelle Marolf, JoAnn Merrick, Frank Ruswick, Julie Sims, Jim Sygo, and several Leadership Academy participants.

EAC Members, staff, and Leadership Academy participants introduced themselves.

Awards

Dave Hamilton, DEQ, explained the Innovations Award presented to the DEQ by the Council of State Governments for the water assessment tool. He further explained the assessment tool process and how we won this award. Only eight awards were given nationally.

Current Issues

Director Chester provided an update on the Environmental Justice Plan. It will be issued soon and will be shared with the EAC. Comments will be accepted until to comment until March 5, 2010.

Director Chester provided an update on the Climate Action Plan. The Center for Climate Strategies will soon release a report describing the impact of the Climate Action Plan on Michigan's economy. Director Chester indicated that he has been asked by the Center for Climate Strategies to participate as one of ten state representatives to the climate summit in Copenhagen in December.

A member asked for an update on the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Liz Browne provided described that EPA recently issue a Request For Proposals for competitive grants. The involved state departments (Environmental Quality, Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Community Health) have been meeting to organize and coordinate grant submissions. Emily Finnell in the Office of Great Lakes is the primary coordinator.

Jim Kasprzak added that the DEQ estimates that it could receive about \$50 million for 2010, and the DNR will receive about \$15 million. The Legislature has provided the necessary appropriations, thus authorizing this spending if we receive the funding.

A member asked if anyone heard about a new Region 5 Director for the U.S. EPA. Director Chester indicated no announcement has been made and he has no further information.

Frank Ruswick provided a draft policy on the guidance documents that implements recommendations made by the EAC on the subject of policy guidance documents. The Senior Management Team is currently reviewing the policy and it should be issued soon.

Mindy Koch provided an update on the DNRE consolidation by sharing the following: A report is scheduled to be submitted to the Governor by December 23, 2009. Transition Manager Bruce Rasher has met with 142 stakeholders, including several former directors. Mindy relayed how Bruce is describing his current plan, stressing that it is subject to change: The organization would include four regions based on watersheds. Each would have regional directors to coordinate department activities in the region. There will be a three-bureaus—resource management, stewardship, and environmental protection—under which the divisions will be organized. There will likely be a reduction in the number of divisions.

Frank Ruswick explained the process that has been used to date, including the involvement of a Core Transition Team, Expanded Transition Teams and meeting between Bruce Rasher and outside agencies. The report will likely include indicate that transition will entail activities that will occur in phases over approximately the next year.

Roadmap Document

The Roadmap document was discussed in great detail and various suggestions were made. Frank will edit the document accordingly and provide it to EAC members for one final review.

EAC members recommended that the Director should share the Roadmap with Legislators and other interested parties. There was discussion about the various ways to share the recommendation and working towards implementation.

It was suggested that in January further discussion take place to address the implementation stage and focus on the “expanding the conversation” section of the recommendation.

Director Chester thanked everyone for their contributions and hard work on this project. He encouraged everyone to distribute and share the document once the final document is available.

Closing

Members agreed to the proposed 2010 meeting schedule (attached).