



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY
LANSING



LIESL EICHLER CLARK
DIRECTOR

MICHIGAN DAM SAFETY TASK FORCE

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 2:00–4:00 PM

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Members Present

Paul Ajegba
Dr. Bryan Burroughs
Dr. Marty Holtgren
Jim Kochevar
Evan Pratt
Dr. Stan Vitton
Brad Wieferich

Melinda (Myndi) Bacon
Liesl Eichler Clark
Dr. Dana Infante
Paul Malocha
Bill Rustem
Abby Watkins

John Broschak
Brett Fessell
Douglas Jester
Tanya Paslawski
Dan Scripps
Glen Wiczorek

Welcome and Task Force Business

Roll Call

The meeting commenced at 2:02 PM.

Chair Evan Pratt welcomed members to the seventh Michigan Dam Safety Task Force meeting.

Approval of the Agenda

Abby Watkins motioned to approve the February 3, 2021, meeting agenda, which Bill Rustem seconded. The motion passed.

Approval of the Draft Minutes

Douglas Jester motioned to approve the draft minutes from the January 13, 2021, meeting, which Dr. Bryan Burroughs seconded. The motion passed.

EGLE Dam Safety Program

EGLE Updates

Director Liesl Clark reminded task force members of the group's charge—to review dam safety in Michigan and provide recommendations on policy, budgetary, and legislative reforms. Through detailed conversations with expert stakeholders and members of the public, the task force discussed the Dam Safety Program's statutory structure, budget, and adequacy of dam safety standards; Michigan's approach to dam management; and the need for investment in dam infrastructure. During each meeting, discussion topics included private and public



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ownership, strength of legal authority to influence outcomes necessary for public safety, ecological concerns, and the intersection of regulatory authority between local, state, and federal partners. While working together as a task force, Clark recounted recurring themes about accountability in ownership and responsibility in authority, public safety and trust, long-term disposition of the dams, concern about natural resources, dam removal, and the role of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Clark explained that all parties involved in these discussions take this work very seriously. She then thanked State of Michigan department representatives for their perspectives, expertise, and time in supporting this process.

Clark outlined next steps for the final report, noting upcoming conversations with legislators to gather additional context for translating the report into statute language and discussing the proposed budget. In terms of administrative tasks, Clark highlighted that the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) is continually working to improve its Dam Safety program. She stated that EGLE has created the Dam Safety unit, allocated additional resources through legislative and executive support, hired additional staff, expanded information on the website, and completed an extensive mapping exercise, with plans to do more. Clark shared her appreciation for this group's work and added that the recommendations will serve as a foundation to improve dam safety in Michigan.

Task Force Final Report

Pratt clarified that the narrative portions of the final report were newer. He explained the task force would discuss five items regarding the final report, four of which were specific text edits; the final item was a general discussion about the report's tone, which several task force members commented on during their review. Each discussion item will be motioned by the task force member who suggested it and will be supported or denied according to majority rules. Following the discussion about tone, task force members voted to support or table the report for further edits.

Text Amendments

1. Replace "gubernatorial appointment" with "EGLE Director Appointees" before the list of task force participants on page three.
 - a. Burroughs motioned to approve, which Douglas Jester seconded; the motion passed.
2. Delete the sentence, "During discussion, there was anecdotal information suggesting the private sector was drawing back from insuring some dams," from the recommendations under the "Improving Dam Safety" section on page 25.
 - a. Burroughs motioned to approve, which Rustem seconded; the motion passed.
3. Delete subsections (i) and (ii) in Appendix D, Section G, "Dams Must Be in the Public Interest," on page 50.
 - a. Burroughs motioned to approve, which Rustem seconded; the motion failed, and the subsections remain.



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4. Replace “policy options” with “policy objectives” in the executive summary’s final paragraph on page eight and in the conclusion’s second paragraph on page 35.
 - a. Rustem motioned to approve, which Brad Wieferich seconded; the motion passed.
5. Discuss amending the tone of urgency within narrative portions of the report, including chapters one and two.
 - a. Pratt requested each task force member provide feedback on the tone of the report. While many members acknowledged the importance of communicating the urgency of implementing these recommendations, a majority agreed the tone should be softened through language amendments in the narrative portions of the report.
 - b. Paul Ajegba motioned to accept the report as it is currently written. Rustem supported the motion. The motion failed.
 - c. Ajegba motioned to review the report after key pieces of the narrative are amended according to task force members’ comments. Rustem supported the motion. The motion passed.

Action Items and Next Steps

To summarize next steps based on the previously approved motion, Pratt requested that task force members send any additional comments to Public Sector Consultants (PSC) staff by Friday, February 5, 2021. Pratt stated that PSC would present a timeline for sending out the updated report to task force members. Clark confirmed with Pratt that members will virtually vote to support the report by email.

Closing Remarks

Clark thanked PSC for helping to organize and facilitate this project, members of the public for providing input throughout the project’s duration, task force members for illuminating new directions for implementing dam safety measures, and Evan Pratt, Douglas Jester, and John Broschak for advancing this work.

The task force will not meet again via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 3:33 PM.