

# **STATEWIDE PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL HANDBOOK**

**Mission Statement, Operating Procedures & Bylaws**

**Established: Spring 1991**

**Revised: January 1995**

**Revised: Winter 2019**

## **Background**

Originally established in 1991, the members of the Statewide Public Advisory Council requested, then developed a Handbook that outlines Council goals, objectives, roles, responsibilities and rules of procedure. This Handbook was revised in 1995, and again in 2019.

The U.S. – Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA), as amended from the 1987 document, directs the two governments to cooperate with state, provincial and tribal governmental units to develop and implement Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) for severely degraded Areas of Concern, as identified by the International Joint Commission. Forty-three (43) such AOCs have been designated: seventeen (17) in Canadian waters, twenty-six (26) in U.S. waters. Originally, there were fourteen (14) AOCs listed in Michigan, including three (3) binational AOCs.

As outlined in Annex 1 of the 2012 revised GLWQA, each Remedial Action Plan (RAP) shall embody a systematic and comprehensive ecosystem approach to restoring, monitoring, and protecting beneficial uses in AOCs. Each RAP will include problem identification, steps to solve or restore such problems, determination (where possible) of responsible parties, timetable(s) for action, and eventually, documentation that the problems are resolved or restored.

The RAP process is “inclusive,” with a decided emphasis on community involvement and public consultation. When formed, and under guidance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), A Communication/Public Participation Strategy was developed and administered, statewide, in support of RAPs for Michigan’s AOCs. From 1996 thru 2017, the AOC program and the SPAC guidance was overseen by the Department of Environmental Quality. In 2011, the program was moved to the Office of the Great Lakes (OGL). Commencing in 2018, the OGL was moved to the MDNR. In 2019, the program was moved to the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, but the strategy and process were always the same. This strategy was designed to ensure public participation in decisions affecting the AOC program; heighten public awareness and knowledge of RAPs; secure broad public participation in the RAP process; and generate public support in the development and implementation of individual RAPs. Implementation of this strategy was through Public Advisory Councils (PACs) established in each AOC.

# **STATEWIDE PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT, OPERATING PROCEDURES and BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I – MISSION**

*The Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) shall act as a forum to provide advice and input to the Office of the Great Lakes on all aspects of the Areas of Concern program.*

## **ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP**

Each AOC is eligible to appoint one voting representative and one or more alternate representative(s) to the SPAC. Each PAC is encouraged to send more than one representative to SPAC meetings. However, each AOC may have only one vote. Appointment shall be for a two-year term, and appointees may be re-appointed. Whenever possible, half of the AOC appointments shall occur each year. State of Michigan (SOM) staff will remind AOCs of their pending appointments, and the SOM shall inform SPAC officers of these results. Alternates will succeed the Voting Member in the event of a mid-term resignation of the Voting Member, and for the remainder of that term.

Delisted AOCs are invited to appoint a representative to the SPAC, but they will not be voting members. SOM staff will not be voting members of the SPAC. Rather, the SOM shall consider the SPAC as a partner in the AOC program.

## **ARTICLE III – OFFICERS**

SPAC Officers shall include a Chair and a Vice-Chair, to be nominated and elected by the Council. Officers shall serve for two (2) years and may be re-elected. Their respective terms of office shall begin upon their election and terminate on the date that a successor is elected by the Council. In the event of a vacancy in the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall ascend to the Chair position and a special election shall be held for the Vice-Chair.

## **ARTICLE IV – ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. **Officers'** responsibilities include:

1. Presiding at all SPAC Meetings;
2. Working with SOM to develop and review meeting agendas;
3. Appointing committees and sub-committees, and determining the scope of their function;

4. Draft or assign members the responsibility for drafting any correspondence, as requested by the Council;
5. Performing all other duties normally deemed incident to the office, or as determined by the Council.

**B. Member's responsibilities include:**

1. Attending all meetings and functions of the SPAC, or contact the AOC alternate to attend and vote in the member's place;
2. Representing the AOC and provide brief updates, to include (but may not be limited to) successes, failures, concerns, project status, etc.;
3. Providing a report back to their respective local PAC on Council activities and program issues;
4. Seeking local PAC input on program issues, and to relay this information or advice to the SOM;
5. Actively participating in meeting discussions and to serve the Council to the best of his/her abilities, assisting the Chair to keep meetings on-track and productive, while respecting the opinions and statements of others.

**C. Committees and Sub-Committees** may be appointed as deemed necessary by the Chair for various tasks, including:

1. Planning Committee (planning SPAC Priorities and Activities)
2. Nominating Committee (secure nominations for Officer positions)
3. Membership Committee (ensure Member appointments)
4. AOC Host Committee (plan details for AOC-hosted meetings)
5. Sub-Committees (as deemed necessary by the Chair)

**D. SOM staff:**

SOM staff are guided by the most recent version of a Roles and Responsibilities document developed by AOC program management.

## **ARTICLE V – MEETINGS**

- A. All SPAC meetings are open to the public. Attendance by AOC residents and other stakeholders is encouraged.
- B. Meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (current edition) where specific rules have not been pre-empted by these bylaws.
- C. Whenever possible, the SPAC will operate by consensus. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, the SPAC will operate by a majority vote, with documentation of the minority position. All decisions will be duly recorded in the meeting minutes.

- D. A quorum shall consist of 50% + 1 of voting members (or their respective alternates). Should no quorum exist, all actions and decisions made at that meeting must be reviewed at the next meeting.
- E. Voting by the duly authorized member or alternate may be by teleconference or videoconference, when available, and when that member is not able to attend in person.
- F. At the discretion of the Chair, members may discuss issues and vote via email, when an issue is time sensitive and the next scheduled meeting is not timely.
- G. Meetings shall be held three or four times per year, unless determined otherwise by the membership. Meeting notices shall be distributed by SOM staff one month prior to the meeting date.
- H. Agendas shall be prepared by SOM staff, in cooperation with officers and distributed no later than two weeks prior to the meeting. Agenda items shall include (but may not be limited to) old and new business, action items and AOC status updates. Additions to the agenda shall be allowed at the discretion of the Chair.
- I. Meeting locations may vary, and may include host AOC Communities. In host AOCs, tours of local projects are encouraged.
- J. Meeting minutes shall be prepared by SOM staff and distributed within a month after the meeting date for SPAC review.

#### **ARTICLE VI – REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES**

Council Members will be eligible to receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in attending Council meetings and other related activities subject to approval by SOM.

- A. Reimbursement shall not exceed the most current mileage, hotel, and meal rates specified by State of Michigan Standardized Travel Regulations.
- B. Other expenses such as parking, bridge tolls, etc. may be authorized for reimbursements, with the proper receipts.
- C. Normally, reimbursement will be for one (1) voting member from each AOC, unless otherwise specified by SOM, and may include one specifically identified individual from each delisted AOC. AOCs whose representatives serve as SPAC Chair or Vice Chair may receive reimbursement for up to two (2) individuals.
- D. Each person requesting reimbursement must be qualified by the State as a State of Michigan vendor.

E. Each member requesting reimbursement must complete the appropriate request form, and return that form to the specified AOC Coordinator, in the proper format and accompanied by appropriate paid receipts.

F. Requests for reimbursement must be received by SOM no more than thirty (30) days after the meeting date.

**ARTICLE VII – SALARIES**

No Officer or Member shall receive a salary from SPAC or from SOM by reason of his/her participation in SPAC activities.

**ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS and/or ADOPTION**

These Bylaws may be amended and/or new Bylaws adopted by a simple majority of duly authorized voting members, at any meeting of the SPAC.

These Bylaws are adopted on this date: \_\_\_\_\_, **2019** and take immediate effect.

I, **Mary Bohling**, Chair of the Statewide Public Advisory Council do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the Bylaws and Rules of Procedure as revised and adopted by the SPAC Membership on \_\_\_\_\_, **2019**

**IN WITNESS THEREOF**, I have affixed my signature on this:

\_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_, **2019**  
**Mary Bohling** SPAC Chair