

CAWG Membership Subcommittee
Discussion Regarding Attracting New Members, CAWG Charter and Registration
Oct. 6, 2022

Members Present in Virtual Meeting: Mary Blanchard, Daniel Brown and Joh Kang.

Prior to the virtual meeting, emails were exchanged between Membership Team members, and also shared email with Sandy Wynn-Stelt and Rick Rediske with the CAWG Leadership Team regarding the CAWG Charter Membership details. Kelly Ploehn also supplied a chart indicating the roll call of members attending the last several meetings.

The Membership Team discussed the fact that it appears some members have stopped attending the monthly CAWG meetings or attend infrequently. It was pointed out that members must feel there is a value to attending to participate. We felt that getting back to more pressing issues of PFAS education and advocacy along with our work in advising MPART should return soon now that we have resolved most of the administrative issues in becoming a citizen-led organization.

As stated in the last CAWG meeting, the original thought of contacting current CAWG sites and recruiting community members through information on the MPART virtual site is not straightforward since the contact person listed is the EGLE site lead for that location: not the municipal or community contacts as we hoped. We are considering alternate ways to reach community members in current unrepresented sites.

The CAWG Charter -

The Membership Team also discussed Membership as described in the CAWG Charter.

Under Expectations of Members, it is written:

Members are expected to engage in the workgroup to the extent possible and consistent with the following:

- Actively participate in scheduled meetings.

- Provide timely follow up to actions items such as submitting written comments on meeting materials.

- Be a representative of the workgroup in his/her community and keep residents informed.

* There is no statement within the Charter on absences or number of missed meetings that are allowed for members. Our concern is that if the member for a site is not attending then their site is not represented and their community is likely not being informed about that site.

Under the Composition section of the Charter, it states that MPART will appoint 2 members from an impacted community.

*The Membership Team questions if there needs to be a limit on number of members from a community with the current number of active CAWG members, but also realizes with over 200 current sites that the number could become difficult to manage at some point in the future.

The Membership Team reviewed the participation and representation of our current membership. We found many representation gaps in geographies, expertise and perspectives. Several areas of the state appear to be not represented or underrepresented. Given the population of greater Detroit Metro area, there are relatively few members from Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and St. Clair Counties.

We believe CAWG members with professional affiliations to environmental organizations, especially watershed councils, land conservancies and clean water groups that support environmental protection, would be especially suited for the CAWG.

We also find that legal and scientific expertise would be useful. CAWG members are encouraged to reach out to other prospective members with these skills, especially with scientific experience in hydrogeology, environmental toxicology and chemistry.

We would like members to help us generate a list of organizations throughout the state that may be able to provide perspective or expertise to the CAWG.

Suggested Discussion for Engagement and Advisory Role to MPART

During our conversation regarding Membership, we did discuss other issues the CAWG has experienced that may be affecting members wanting to stay engaged with the CAWG.

The CAWG Charter is clear that the CAWG is an advisory group only with no authority to make changes to state agency operations, policies or regulations. We can simply make recommendations.

Numerous CAWG members feel, however, that in some key ways, progress from state agencies has been slow or that agencies have not been sufficiently responsive to CAWG member concerns. In circumstances where CAWG recommendations are not being accepted or translated into action by the state, such as the Notification Document, the CAWG membership subcommittee feels the CAWG may establish expectations for member actions and notify MPART of these expectations.

As a starting point, we suggest discussion regarding making a formal recommendation from the CAWG on a particular issue:

1. CAWG members should draft and finalize an open memo to MPART and state officials.
2. The CAWG will vote on officially presenting the memo to the state. If the vote passes, CAWG members and state officials will be encouraged to circulate the memo publicly within their communities and throughout their private and professional networks.
3. If sufficient action is not taken in a timely manner by state agencies, the CAWG may hold another vote to clarify that position and encourage prompt action by state officials. This recommendation should include a clear deadline for a response from state officials. This recommendation, as with all CAWG materials, will be made public. The CAWG cannot direct the private actions of its members, and it is possible that CAWG members will pursue action unrelated to formal CAWG activities on more aggressive timelines or in different ways.
4. Once a deadline passes and state officials have or have not responded, CAWG members will review the response.
 - a. Finding the response adequate, CAWG members will continue to provide advice on the issue during CAWG meetings.
 - b. Finding the response inadequate or absent, CAWG members may vote to provide public notification to the Governor's office. Such notification will likely include a summary of the problem, a summary of the CAWG's recommendations, and a summary of shortfalls within the state's response. Providing direct notification to the Governor's Office comports with the charter and the spirit of the CAWG. Depending on the Governor's response, and after a pre-determined amount of time set by CAWG members, the public notification may be released to the media.

We welcome your comments.

The Membership Team
Mary Blanchard, Daniel Brown and Joh Kang