

Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Justice Advisory Board

Public Comment Protocol

As stated in the Bylaws for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Justice Advisory Board, "Outside presentations such as speakers, films, etc., will be allowed at the discretion of the chairperson. Any members may request the Board as a whole to determine whether a presentation shall be permitted." This Protocol will outline steps that the Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB) will take to consider, and if applicable, respond to comments received.

Public Comment

Public comment will be open to all individuals, community groups or organizations. Comments may be submitted orally or in writing. When possible, commenters requesting to speak before the EJAB will be contacted prior to the next board meeting to explain the public comment process and determine the applicability of comments.

- There are Environmental Advocates in the southwest region, southcentral region and southeast region. The Director of Environmental Advocate in Harrisburg oversees the northwest region, northcentral region and northeast region. If appropriate, comments or concerns may be routed to one of these individuals if it appears assistance regarding an issue can be helpful more through this channel.

Written comments will be accepted at any time. If requested, responses to the commenter will attempt to be made available no more than 30 days after the next scheduled EJAB meeting.

- All comments should clearly state comments or concerns to be addressed by the board. Comments should include all necessary contact information for follow-up responses. Written comments may be submitted by mail, email, or via the EJAB public participation subcommittee online message board. Comments should be addressed to:

Director of Office of Environmental Advocate
16th floor, Rachael Carson State Office Building
400 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101-2301
mkohl@state.pa.us

The online message board can be accessed at:

<http://www.dep.state.pa.us/discussion.environmentaladvocate/discussion.asp?Category=Public+Participation+Subcommittee>

- If the board or chairperson feels that an oral presentation would benefit the board, contact will be made prior to the upcoming meeting. The commenter will be invited to attend and present oral comments. In the event the invitation is declined, the response will follow the protocol for written comments.

Oral comments will be accepted during scheduled board meetings. Times for public comment will be established on the bi-monthly agenda.

- Please note all EJAB meetings take place in **Room 105 of the Rachael Carson State Office Building on Market Street in Harrisburg.** EJAB meets once every two months at this location.

Comment Review

For comments submitted in writing, the Public Participation Subcommittee will complete an initial review. The subcommittee will then present the comments to the board at the upcoming meeting. Once this committee has completed its recommendations, the full EJAB will review its position and recommendations in order for a final response document to be generated.

Oral comments made to the board will be discussed and the commenter provided with a written response from the board Chair a minimum of 90 days following the board meeting in which they were presented. If a resolution is approaching, some flexibility in response time will be considered.

Follow Up from EJAB

All responses to comments made to the board will be sent to the contact person on behalf of the board Chair and posted on the DEP Environmental Advocate website at the discretion of the Department.

In the event that the board feels that the department should take action, the board Chair will submit both the comments and responses to the Director of the Office of Environmental Advocate. These documents should contain recommendations from the board for current or future action by the department.

In the event it has been decided EJAB cannot recommend action, suggestions for the appropriate contact will be made.