

# **SMALL BUSINESS COMPLIANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**November 20, 2025**

Members Present: Dale Kaplan, Walter Schroth, Laura Griffin, Samantha Harmon, Jeremy Hancher, Eric Kuipers, Leora Appleby (Virtual), Richard Burrell (Virtual)

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## **Call to Order and Introductions**

The Small Business Compliance Advisory Committee's (SBCAC or Committee) November 20, 2025, meeting was called to order by Chair, Dale Kaplan, at 10:00 a.m. in the Rachel Carson State Office Building, Room 105, Harrisburg. Several in attendance also joined via Teams conference call.

Members of the Committee and attendees in Room 105 introduced themselves.

## **Administrative Items**

### **Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The May 22, 2025, draft meeting minutes were approved as written.

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

## **Informational Items**

### **Small Business Ombudsman (SBO) Report**

DEP SBO, Samantha Harmon, began by providing a status update on the Small Business Advantage Grant program (SBAG), an annual program for energy efficiency and pollution prevention and natural resource protection assistance.

The 2025-2026 SBAG grant program opened to applications on August 1, 2025, with \$1 million in funding. The grant will close on March 13, 2026, or when funds are exhausted.

The Pollution Prevention Assistance Account (PPAA) loan program has \$1,719,460 available as of October 1, 2025. Updates are expected near the start of 2026 to the application documents and the creation of new program guidance. A calculator is also expected to be included as part of this.

Ms. Harmon mentioned that the SBO office has decided to run a marketing campaign for the SBAG program, as the awareness of the program among small businesses appears to have been waning in recent years. In September, outreach emails were distributed and marketing via social media posts was done on a variety of platforms,

such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and X. Another round of social media posts and emails is planned for this year.

Ms. Harmon presented general information on what the SBO does for the Pennsylvania Association of Accredited Environmental Laboratories and the various committees and public outreach in which she participated. She mentioned plans to once again work on revisions to the DEP small business assistance related webpage and provided an update on efforts to improve DEP's small business database.

#### Environmental Management Assistance Program (EMAP)

Jeremy Hancher, EMAP Program Manager, provided an update on EMAP activities for the second and third quarters of 2025 (April 1 to September 30).

Businesses often requested help with regulatory approvals and compliance. Guidance was needed for navigating General Permits (GP-5 and GP-14) and completing RFD forms, while compliance support focused on preparing annual Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) reports for oil and gas, semi-annual submissions to the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) and hazardous waste documentation. EMAP has received requests for clarification on the applicability of the VOC reports for conventional owners and operators, businesses seeking help on air permits, emission calculations and stack testing. There were inquiries from various industries highlighting the need for technical guidance in specialized industries.

Small businesses also sought general and technical assistance, including information on grant opportunities like the Reducing Industrial Sector Emissions in Pennsylvania program (RISE PA) and advice on air, waste, and water regulations. There were also questions relating to SBAG and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance. Additionally, startups and new businesses requested operational assistance, particularly for mobile services and new managers learning to navigate environmental requirements and permitting processes.

EMAP recently assisted a small business after the business received notice from a law firm and watershed group alleging inadequate evaluation of industrial stormwater requirements. It appears more small businesses are being contacted by outside groups (such as advocacy groups or attorney offices) regarding stormwater compliance, sometimes before regulators engage, raising questions about whether this is an isolated incident or part of a broader trend.

Members expressed concerns regarding outside groups sending notices to small businesses, indicating their interests may be more-so associated with generating revenue for themselves, rather than having a genuine concern for environmental protection.

#### Annual Reporting Requirements of 2022 VOC Reduction Rules

Cary Miller, Air Quality Program Specialist for DEP Air Quality, presented on DEP's 2022 VOC Reduction Rules relating to the control of VOC emissions from oil and

natural gas sources. He provided a history of the rules, the regulatory requirements under the rules for unconventional and conventional owner/operators, and details on assistance that is available to smaller owner/operators to comply with the reporting requirements of the rules.

A discussion included reporting requirements, compliance assistance materials and DEP outreach to industry groups.

Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Presentation

Jessica Shirley, Secretary of DEP, presented an overview of DEP, highlighting the agency's structure, the roles of its staff and the communities that benefit from their work. She highlighted DEP's mission to safeguard Pennsylvania's environment for both residents and visitors, while also outlining the agency's vision, core values, and long-term goals.

Proposed Rulemaking for Administrative Amendments to 25 Pa. Code Chapters 121 and 127

Luke Zeisloft, Air Quality Engineering Trainee for DEP Air Quality, presented on Administrative Amendments 25 Pa. Code Chapters 121 and 127, relating to administrative updates that apply to owners and operators of stationary facilities that are required to have operating permits controlling air pollution emissions. The proposed rulemaking revises definitions, clarifies DEP's role in plan approval and permit compliance demonstrations, and removes unnecessary language and grammatical errors. It also eliminates provisions on inter-pollutant trading that are no longer allowed under recent federal case law and establishes a clear deadline for submitting Title V operating permit applications in line with the Clean Air Act.

A discussion on the topic included Mr. Hancher asking about the requirement of publication notices, online versus printed newspapers, timing of the public comment period and the definition of "Business Entity".

Proposed Guidance Revisions: Regional Civil Penalty Assessment Procedures & Compliance Assurance Policies

Deborah Wehr, Environmental Group Manager for DEP Air Quality, presented on DEP's proposed revisions to its civil penalty assessment guidance and compliance assurance policies for air quality enforcement. These policies are due to be updated (last updates seen in 2009 and 2012) to modernize language and definitions and adjust the penalty policy fee schedules to account for inflation.

A discussion included the definition of small business that was used.

Approval of 2026 Meeting Schedule

The committee unanimously voted to approve the 2026 meeting schedule as follows:

- Thursday, February 12
- Thursday, May 21
- Thursday, August 20

**DRAFT SBCAC Meeting Minutes 11/20/2025**

- Thursday, November 19

Other Business and Discussion

There was no additional business or discussion.

Adjournment

The SBCAC meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

The next SBCAC meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2026.