

November 2025 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, November 19 from 1 – 4:00 p.m.

Join in person or online

- In person: [520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155](#), lower level conference rooms
 - Online: For the meeting link and more information, visit the [board meeting webpage](#)
-

Participating in board meetings

Attending in person

The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) will convene its meeting in person at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency St. Paul office building. All visitors must sign in at the front desk.

Transportation options:

- Bicycle: Visit the [Saint Paul Bike Map](#) webpage for route information. Outdoor bicycle parking is available to the left of the front doors near the loading dock.
- Transit: Use [Metro Transit's Trip Planner](#) to determine the best routes and times.
- Car: You may park in a Visitor Parking space in the parking lot just outside the front door, or park in one of the visitor lots. The visitor lots are the Blue Lot (Olive St. and University Ave.) and the Jupiter Lot (on Grove St. across from the Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center); please see the [parking map](#). Parking in these lots is free of charge. You must register your vehicle at the front desk upon arrival.

Attending virtually

Members of the public may join the meeting virtually using the Teams link at the board meeting webpage link above. Please review the [Guide to Teams Participation](#) for additional information.

Accessibility

Please contact Environmental Quality Board (EQB) staff at least one week prior to the event at info.EQB@state.mn.us to arrange an accommodation. Meeting materials can be provided in different forms, such as large print, braille, or on a recording.

Public engagement opportunities at EQB meetings

EQB encourages public input and appreciates the opportunity to build shared understanding with members of the public. The opportunities for public engagement for this meeting are below.

Public comment opportunities at EQB meetings

EQB encourages public engagement and appreciates the opportunity to build shared understanding with members of the public. There are multiple ways to engage with staff and board members. One important way is to provide public comment at a board meeting.

The public comment period(s) at a board meeting provide an opportunity for members of the public to inform the board about their views related to the specific item under discussion or something related to the board's purview or authority. Tips for providing comments:

- Ensure that your comments are relevant and specific to the topic you are addressing.
- Say what you want the board to know or consider in moving forward with a piece of work.
- Identify a specific action that you want the Board to take.

If you have a question for the board or EQB staff, it will be noted by staff who will get back to you at a later time. This ensures that we have enough time at a meeting for all commenters to provide input to the board and that your questions can be fully considered.

Oral public comment



At each meeting, the agenda will show when the board will accept oral public comment. The chair will use their discretion to direct public comment and ensure the board's ability to effectively conduct business.

Procedure for giving oral public comment:

- **Virtual:** when prompted, use the "raise hand" feature in Teams, located at the top of your screen.
- **In person:** sign up at the welcome table before the meeting starts.
- When the chairperson calls on you to speak:
 - Introduce yourself before beginning your comment.
 - Please keep your remarks to the agenda item at hand.
 - Please be respectful of board members, staff, and other meeting participants. The chair, vice-chair, or other presiding officer will not tolerate personal attacks.
- The chairperson may limit commenters' time for remarks to ensure there is equal opportunity for the public to comment. Generally, your remarks will be limited to two (2) minutes.
- The chairperson may discontinue a commenter's time to speak if the comments are not reasonably related to the agenda item at hand.

Written public comment



You may submit written comment to EQB by emailing your letter to info.EQB@state.mn.us or mailing to: Environmental Quality Board, 520 Lafayette Road, Saint Paul, MN 55155. Comments must be received by EQB staff **by noon the day before the meeting**.

Staff will compile letters, make them available to members and the public, and attach them to the public record. Any written comments received after this deadline will be included in the next meeting packet.

Please only submit information that you wish to make available publicly. EQB does not edit or delete submissions that include personal information. We reserve the right to not publish any comments we deem offensive, intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying, or that contain any other inappropriate or aggressive behavior.

Agenda

Note that all listed times are estimates and are advisory only.

1. Welcome and roll call (1:00 pm)

Nancy Daubenberger – Chair, EQB; Commissioner, Department of Transportation

2. Approval of consent agenda (1:10 pm)

- Meeting minutes from the October 15, 2025, Environmental Quality Board meeting on packet page 5
- Preliminary agenda for the November 19, 2025, Environmental Quality Board meeting

3. Executive Director's report (1:15 pm)

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

4. Annual pollinator report – acceptance (1:20 pm)

Type of item: Decision

Summary: The Board will hear a presentation about the 2025 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report . The Board will consider a resolution to accept the 2025 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report, which includes an update on the implementation of the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework, fulfilling the requirements of EO 19-28. The report is on page 12 of the packet.

Outcome: The Board accepts the 2025 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report and supports cross-agency collaboration to lead the implementation of the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework.

Presenter: Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, PhD – State Pollinator Coordinator, Environmental Quality Board; Christina Locke, PhD – Pollinator Conservation Coordinator, Department of Natural Resources

Public comment: EQB will take public comment specifically on this item.

5. Continuous Improvement (CI) update (2:05 pm)

Type of item: Decision

Summary: In June 2023, the Environmental Quality Board (EQB or Board) established a continuous improvement (CI) process supporting the Board's responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of Minnesota's environmental review (ER) program. The CI process includes procedural steps to be implemented on a regular basis. Based on past experience and Board discussion, EQB staff are proposing minor changes to the process step titles and the frequency of CI completion. This requires an updated resolution to be voted on by the Board. A memo is on page 63 of the packet.

Outcome: Discussion and a vote on the resolution

Presenter: Kayla Walsh – Environmental Review Program Administrator

Public comment: EQB will take public comment specifically on this item.

Break (2:25 pm)

6. Foundational information on data centers, part 2 (2:30 p.m.)

Type of item: Informational

Summary: Data centers house IT infrastructure to run and deliver computing applications and services. As people and the economy increasingly rely on cloud-based data storage and computing, including AI, there is increasing demand for the services provided by data centers, and there are proposals being made to locate larger data centers in Minnesota. In siting and developing data centers, there is a particular need to look at the facilities' energy and water requirements.

Data centers may rely on water-based technologies for cooling; this means there are potential regulatory considerations related to both water supply (incoming) and water discharge (outgoing) and how water use might impact long-term water sustainability. We will discuss, at a high level, these considerations.

- EQB staff will recap last month's meeting and provide a brief overview of today's discussion
- DNR staff will provide an overview of water appropriations and discuss new requirements for pre-application evaluation of water use relevant to data centers
- Met Council staff will discuss the potential impacts in regional water supply planning and the regional wastewater system
- MDH will provide information about additional considerations for individual public water systems and private wells

Outcome: The staff provide foundational information about data centers and the connections to water, helping Board members increase their understanding of the issue. This information will support future discussion about potential work for the EQB, focused around two of our key outcomes – to support program development on priority and emerging environmental issues and to maintain and improve Minnesota's environmental review program.

Presenters:

- EQB: Catherine Neuschler
- DNR: Jason Moeckel
- Met Council: Jen Kostrzeweski
- MDH: Steve Robertson

Public comment: EQB will take public comment specifically on this item. Commenters may make recommendations to the Board on issues the Board should further explore or consider taking action on; these recommendations should be on issues related to the Board's specific role and authorities. (Such as the Board's general authority over environmental review procedures under Minn. R. 4410. Note that EQB does not oversee RGU work or decisions on specific projects or environmental review documents.)

7. Closing and adjournment

October 2025 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, October 15, 2025 | 1:00-4:00 p.m. | 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155, lower level conference room south and online via Teams.

Minutes

1. Welcome and roll call

Chair Nancy Daubenberger called to order the regular meeting of the Environmental Quality Board.

Members present: Joseph Bauerkemper, Peter Bakken, Ed Brands, Nancy Daubenberger, Tamar Gronvall, Daniel Katzenberger, Nicholas Martin, Paul Nelson, Angie Smith, Sarah Strommen, Matt Varilek

Members excused: Grace Arnold, Deb Barber, Brooke Cunningham, Rylee Hince, Todd Holman, Katrina Kessler, Thom Petersen

Proxies present: Sydnie Lieb (for Arnold), Peter Lindstrom (for Barber), Myra Kunas (for Cunningham), Peter Tester (for Kessler), Stephan Roos (for Petersen)

EQB staff present: Catherine Neuschler, Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, Hazel Houle, Jesse Krzenski, Sarah Lerohl, Priscilla Villa-Watt, Kayla Walsh

Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from September 17, 2025, Environmental Quality Board meeting
- Proposed agenda for October 15, 2025, Environmental Quality Board meeting

Motion: Board Member Katzenberger moved to approve the consent agenda; Board Member Nelson seconded.

In favor: Bakken, Daubenberger, Gronvall, Holman, Katzenberger, Martin, Nelson, Petersen, Smith, Strommen, Varilek

Opposed: none

Excused: Arnold, Brands, Cunningham, Hince, Holman, Kessler, Petersen

2. Executive Director's report

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

- Energy infrastructure rule: The notice of intent to adopt (also known as the proposed rule) related to environmental review and energy projects went out on October 6, 2025. Comments can be submitted (to the Court of Administrative Hearings) through November 14, 2025. All the information is available on our [rules and regulations webpage](#). Kayla Walsh is going to be taking this project over from Colleen Hetzel.
- Pollinator engagement: Rebeca and her collaborators kicked off a series of pollinator-related webinars on October 2, 2025 with the topic “Fall and Pollinators”. We had 254 people registered from around the state to learn why fall is critical for the survival of pollinators and what steps we can take during this season to help them overwinter successfully. Our guest speakers included experts from the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, the University of Minnesota Bee Lab, and Metro Blooms, who talked about the different ways pollinators face the winter, how we can create overwintering habitat, and the way climate change is altering this phenomenon. The webinar was recorded and is available to view on our YouTube channel and our [pollinator webpage](#).
- Climate Calculator: Steph Aho will be traveling and presenting a poster at the Midwest Climate Resilience conference in Wisconsin next week and she's also been accepted to present at the annual Conference on the Environment by the Air and Waste Management Association in early November to show how the calculator works, what it does, and how it can help people do their climate calculations for their environmental review.

3. Office of Enterprise Sustainability annual update

Presenter: Marcus Grubbs – Director, Office of Enterprise Sustainability, Department of Administration

Type of item: Informational

Summary: Executive Order 19-27 directs Minnesota's state government to “make efficient use of water and energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and ensure that goods and services procured by the government are sustainable”. The Office of Enterprise Sustainability is required to publish an annual report that is shared with the public and presented to the EQB. Sustainability metrics can be found at <https://sustainability.mn.gov/>.

Outcome: The Board was informed and the requirements of the EO were met.

4. Foundational information on data centers, part 1

Presenters:

- EQB: Catherine Neuschler, Sarah Lerohl
- Department of Economic Development (DEED): Chet Bodin

- Public Utilities Commission (PUC): Mike Bull, Jenna Ness
- Department of Commerce (Commerce): Dr. Sydnie Lieb
- Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): Richard Cordes

Type of item: Informational

Summary: Data centers house IT infrastructure to run and deliver computing applications and services. As people and the economy increasingly rely on cloud-based data storage and computing, including AI, there is increasing demand for the services provided by data centers, and there are proposals being made to locate larger data centers in Minnesota. In siting and developing data centers, there is a particular need to look at the facilities' energy and water requirements.

Depending on any given facility's size and energy and water needs, data centers may be subject to multiple environmental review and regulatory requirements. This meeting focused, at a high level, on potential environmental review and energy regulatory considerations related to data centers.

- DEED staff provided an overview of the development of data centers in Minnesota
- EQB staff provided an overview of environmental review under Minn. R. 4410
- PUC and Commerce staff provided an overview of permitting and review under energy statutes (Minn. Stat. 216B and Minn. Stat. 216I)
- MPCA staff provided a brief overview of considerations for air permitting
- Commerce and DEED staff provided an update on 2025 legislation

At the November meeting EQB and agency staff will discuss environmental review and regulatory considerations related to water.

Discussion:

- What would the process look like for creation of a mandatory category and associated thresholds pertaining to data centers?
 - **Response:** The board does have the authority to create mandatory categories. The entire process would take about two years to complete.
- Does the mandatory category ensure that projects would have to do an EAW or an EIS depending on how the category works? Or is the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) a potential alternative to those things even in the presence of a mandatory category?
 - **Response:** The AUAR could be used as a pathway for review for applicable project types. But if something falls under the excluded categories - there are 17 under the EAW and 12 under the EIS - if a project triggers one of those excluded categories they would not be able to use the AUAR.
- Where does all this intersect? What role, if any, does the EQB currently have in ensuring that RGUs are using AUARs appropriately?
 - **Response:** The RGUs make the decisions but the EQB can give guidance. If there's an appeal filed to an AUAR it goes through the district courts.

- Would it be possible to do an AUAR but also have an EAW as a part of that to address a mandatory category?
 - **Response:** Yes. The AUAR process historically has a couple of ways that can exclude projects at the beginning, so it was anticipated that there may be projects or developments that would use an AUAR and an EAW or an EIS.
- If there are any environmental positives involved in a data center, e.g. heat used to displace fossil fuel use currently being used in the area, that information can be added to the mitigation plan.
- How would a community go about determining whether they want to do a discretionary EAW or EIS on a data center project or deliberately use an AUAR? There's concern about the lack of transparency of AUARs.
 - **Response:** Decision making authority is delegated to the RGU. The rule has very specific instances where a review could be required. It would be up to the the RGU and any government that has a permitting authority could choose to order a discretionary review if a review is not completed.
- Why would a proposer use an AUAR if there's a potential that they might also have to do another type of environmental review if mandatory categories are triggered?
 - **Response:** The AUAR provides a level of flexibility in community planning so if a project proposer has not committed to a project or a site, the AUAR allows communities to prepare for that with associated infrastructure and some of the other environmental effects of development.
- There is one RGU for an AUAR but multiple permits from various agencies might be required.
- Minnesota has a robust regulatory environment and resource planning statute, so is better prepared than other states to handle data center regulations.

Public comment:

- Nick Rhinehart, Gretchen Kehoe, and Peter Taylor provided written comments and input on the Hermantown AUAR ([attached to the October packet](#)).
- Trish Sieh – Civil Engineer at Kimley-Horn: Has worked on small and large-scale data centers for about 13 years and, because of her experience is offering herself as a resource to the board.
- Ashlynn Kendzior – Staff Attorney for the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy:
 - Data centers are uniquely positioned to have statewide impacts. Ten of the proposed data centers proposed in Minnesota use the same amount of energy as every single home. Individually demand hundreds of millions of gallons of water annually.
 - The RGU has to be able to address all of the statewide impacts when conducting its environmental review - the easiest way to do that would be to create a mandatory EIS category for data centers that designates a statewide agency as the RGU. This would ensure that the cumulative potential impacts of data centers are taken into consideration.

- Asks that EQB offer additional guidance on what RGU's must do to satisfy AUAR requirements for large specific projects under Subpart 5a.
- Minnesotans deserve a robust environmental review process so that residents can understand the potential environmental impacts of data centers on their lives, their communities, and the state.
- Clarissa Ek – Resident of Hermantown:
 - Ms. Ek just recently learned that the Hermantown AUAR is for a large-scale data center. She was aware of the AUAR completed in September 2025 and that it was noted that the development scenario would result in significant changes to property, including 2.3 million cubic yards of excavation over 184 yards. She and her neighbors' properties are within a quarter of a mile from the project site.
 - She and her neighbors were never notified about the data center plan, even though it seems it has been known at least since November 2024 when local council members signed non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) for the project. The City of Hermantown is trying to push this data center through even though the AUAR is not sufficient for a data center.
 - Would like guidance on what she and other locals can do to stop the AUAR from moving forward. She believes the data center project should require an EIS.
- Aubree Dirkin – Resident of Pine Island:
 - She wants to inform the board from a community perspective and small town what's happening with the data center. The second largest data center proposal in the state, 3,000,000 square feet, is planned in her rural farm town of less than 4000 people. The entire town, including schools, medicals clinics, and senior housing is less than a mile from the proposed site. She's concerned about the insufficient time residents have to be aware of the development and lack of transparency in these developments.
 - When residents speak up, they're ignored. When there are concerns that an AUAR is inadequate, they're also ignored, and it's resulting in lawsuit after lawsuit.
 - The timing of these data center plans is happening when the legislature is not in session, so the earliest that any additional guardrails at the state level could happen is February 2026, which would be too late for Pine Island residents.
 - Would like a moratorium placed on hyperscale data center developments until the needed guardrails are in place.
- Nick Rhinehart – Resident of Hermantown: The Hermantown AUAR was classified as light industrial which is confusing because residents don't know what the true project is by looking at the AUAR, and the the AUAR in this case was performed by the the company doing it, not the RGU. Use of AUARs need to be evaluated for data centers. It lacks transparency to the people of the towns; by the time locals can act, the AUAR has already been approved.

- Peg Furshong:
 - Projects like data centers that have complex levels of energy and water needs are often beyond the capacity of the local government making the decision for the AUAR. Their charge in their position is to fund their operations and these data centers have lots of money. Project proposers wave that money out in front of them and get them to sign the NDAs.
 - When you're looking at the the data center footprint for water, please also consider the water for the energy generation because in in many cases there's more water use to generate the energy needed than there is used for cooling the data centers.
- Katie Hawkins: What do we do if citizens, the broader public, are feeling that city administration or elected officials, especially under NDAs, are using AUARs inappropriately against the public will or without consent, without community support? It feels like the AUAR is being used by the city against the public to not give a choice. Guidance or recommendations for the public would be greatly appreciated.

Outcome: The staff provided foundational information about data centers, helping Board members increase their understanding of the issue. This information will support future discussion about potential work for the EQB, focused around two of EQB's key outcomes – to support program development on priority and emerging environmental issues and to maintain and improve Minnesota's environmental review program.

5. Closing and adjournment

Having reached the end of the agenda, the Chair asked if there was any further business.

Adjournment:

With no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

RESOLUTION OF THE MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Acceptance of the 2025 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report

Pollinators are essential for healthy ecosystems and the sustainability of our food production systems. However, they face multiple threats, including the loss and fragmentation of their habitat, diseases, parasites, pesticides, and climate change.

In Minnesota, Executive Order 19-28 directs state agencies to restore healthy, diverse pollinator populations, and instructs the Environmental Quality Board (Board) to convene the interagency pollinator protection team (the interagency team) to take action and report on progress to the Board in a report by December 1 of each year.

The 2024 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report includes a description of the work the interagency team conducted to prioritize the implementation of the Pollinator Action Framework (Framework) published in the 2023 report. This year's pollinator report includes a status update of the implementation of the Framework, highlights agencies' accomplishments, and features stories of success.

The board resolves to accept the 2025 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report, prepared by the interagency pollinator protection team.

The board further resolves to support cross-agency collaboration to lead the implementation of the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework.

The board approved and adopted this resolution on November 19, 2025.

Nancy Daubenberger, Chair
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Date: _____

Attachments: 2025 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report



2025 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Annual Report

Prepared by

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Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille or audio recording.

2025 Interagency Pollinator Protection Team

Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, Ph.D.	Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
Christina Locke, Ph.D.	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Jamison Scholer, M.S.	Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Angela Kolonich, Ph.D.	Minnesota Department of Education
Tina Markeson	Minnesota Department of Transportation
Christopher E. Smith, M.S., M.L.S.	Minnesota Department of Transportation
Laura Marti	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Michelle Gage, CEM	Minnesota Department of Corrections
Erik Runquist, Ph.D.	Minnesota Zoo
David Bell, MPH	Minnesota Department of Health
Kari Suchy	Minnesota Department of Administration
Erin Loeffler	Board of Water and Soil Resources

Cover photo: Marked and released as part of a reintroduction program by Minnesota Zoo scientists, Dakota skipper butterflies (*Hesperia dacotae*; Minnesota Endangered, United States Threatened species) mate in a central Minnesota prairie. Photo by the Minnesota Zoological Garden

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Charge

The state of Minnesota recognizes that pollinators are essential for the environment, economy, and our way of life. Executive Order 19-28 (EO 19-28) directs state agencies to work together to protect pollinators, with the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) charged with convening and leading an interagency team to restore healthy, diverse pollinator populations in the state.

The interagency team for pollinator protection (the interagency team) consists of staff from the Department of Administration (ADMIN), Agriculture (MDA), Corrections (MnDOC), Education (MDE), Health (MDH), Natural Resources (DNR), Transportation (MnDOT), the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), the Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and the Minnesota Zoological Garden (Minnesota Zoo). Staff from these agencies provide operational support, ensure interagency collaboration, develop cross-agency policies and programs, and report on progress toward statewide pollinator protection goals to the EQB with an annual report.

Introduction

Worldwide, pollinators play a critical role in supporting both people and the environment; they are vital to the health of natural ecosystems, and to food security. Unfortunately, pollinator populations continue to face threats such as the loss and fragmentation of their habitat, pesticide exposure, disease and parasites, and climate change. These factors do not affect pollinators in isolation, they act together and amplify each other's harmful effects.

Minnesota is home to a diversity of pollinators; even if we only consider wild bees, our state has over 500 recorded species (so far!). Diverse pollinator communities allow flowering plants in natural areas and gardens to flourish, supporting healthy and resilient ecosystems, and supports the state's economy by helping many crops set seed and fruit. This diversity also increases the complexity of pollinator protection efforts, because each species has its own biology and habitat needs.

Since 2016, the interagency team and its members agencies have been working to better understand Minnesota's pollinators and their needs, and how to protect them to achieve our desired outcome of healthy, diverse pollinator populations that sustain and enhance our state's environment, economy, and way of life. The interagency team works toward the three pollinator protection goals outlined by the EO 19-28:

- 1) Lands throughout Minnesota support healthy, diverse, and abundant pollinator populations.
- 2) Minnesotans use pesticides judiciously and only when necessary, to reduce harm to pollinators from pesticides while retaining economic strength.
- 3) Minnesotans understand, value, and actively support pollinators.

This year, the interagency team faced challenges due to changes in state and federal funding for programs key to our pollinator protection efforts. Despite this, our commitment to helping pollinators continues. Inspired by the resilience and resourcefulness of pollinators themselves, we have worked to find ways to optimize resources; collaborate and find opportunities to extend each other's capacity to make progress. This report contains an update on the implementation of the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework (Framework), highlights from recent state agencies actions, and stories of success.

Figure 1. A sweat bee (*Agapostemon* sp) feeds on a flower. Photo by Heather Holm



Implementation of the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework

The Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework (developed by the interagency team from 2022-2023) is designed to guide the use of resources and optimize the state's capacity for action around the pollinator protection goals. The Framework includes actions state agencies can **lead** by taking administrative action, actions the state legislature can **enact** by writing laws and allocating funds, and actions for which the state can **encourage** participation of other individuals, communities, and organizations to participate in. The full Framework matrix was published in the [2023 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Annual Report](#).

In 2024, the interagency team worked on prioritizing the actions state agencies can lead and encourage. Team members scored actions based on expected magnitude of impact the action would have on a given pollinator protection goal, and the anticipated effort it would take to complete the action. We also identified further opportunities for collaboration among state agencies with external organizations.

In 2025, the interagency team began to use the Framework to track our progress and streamline the development of the annual report to the EQB. Our agencies' collective and individual efforts are now reflected in the Framework implementation matrix (matrix) included in Appendix 1. In this and future reports, we will use the matrix to report progress toward implementing the Framework via the actions and programs agencies are leading or encouraging. The following two sections highlight some of these actions, programs, and accomplishments.

2025 Highlights

Environmental Quality Board

- **Interagency coordination.** Convened and led the interagency pollinator protection team in monthly meetings, tracking the implementation of the pollinator action framework and developing the pollinator annual report.
- **Outreach and public engagement events.**
 - Co-sponsored and tabled at the North American Monarch Summit and hosted a table at the Pollinator Party in Lyndale Park Gardens, and the Monarch Festival in Lake Nokomis, Minneapolis.
 - Organized the celebration of Pollinator Day at the State Fair in collaboration with the Pollution Control Agency and the Department of Natural Resources.

- Purchased 24,000 native seed packets and shared with state agencies from the interagency team. Distributed 10,000+ at pollinator outreach events. Organized peer-to-peer and informational webinars to encourage and promote pollinator protection actions across the state in collaboration with state agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The events will be held during late fall and winter of 2025, and spring of 2026.

Board of Water and Soil Resources

- **Lawns to Legumes (L2L) Program.** The Lawns to Legumes program offers a combination of workshops, coaching, planting guides and cost-share funding (individual support grants) for installing pollinator-friendly native plantings in residential lawns. Since the launch of the program in 2019, there have been nearly 10,000 projects installed, and 20,000 beneficial pollinator trees and shrubs planted. Projects cover over 11 million sq. ft of habitat and sequester nearly 200 metric tons of carbon per year. In 2025, the current 10 Pollinator Pathways grantees have begun implementing a community conservation approach by hosting workshops, designing and installing habitat throughout the state. BWSR is emphasizing collaboration with schools to engage the next generation of pollinator conservationists.
- **Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP).** This competitive grant program, focused on restoring and enhancing diverse native habitat across the state, continues to gain momentum in supporting pollinators and other wildlife species. In 2025, the current 16 HELP grantees have begun restoration and enhancement activities on the on the 110 proposed projects.
- **Habitat Friendly Utilities and Solar Programs.** These programs build collaboration with utility companies and conservation partners to increase landscape resiliency (along with co-benefits such as plant diversity, pollinator habitat, carbon sequestration, soil health, and water management) in solar projects and along utility corridors. Nearly 70 projects meet the Minnesota Habitat Friendly Solar standard, covering over 7,000 acres. In 2025 funds were provided to six organizations to restore utility corridors through the Habitat Friendly Utilities Program.
- **Conservation Easements.** The Reinvest in Minnesota and Wetland Bank easement programs currently focus on permanent wetland restoration, adjacent native grassland wildlife habitat complexes and permanent riparian buffers. They have resulted in over 7,700 easements that provide valuable pollinator habitat.
- **Mn Conservation Reserve Program.** The CRP State Incentive Grant Program supports water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat by helping landowners install or preserve best management practices. This state investment leverages federal funding and private stewardship, providing measurable environmental benefits on 3,300 acres across Minnesota.
- **Pollinator Conservation Outreach and Education.** Staff participated in several community events, including the 2025 Mino-Bimaadiziwin Fond du Lac Health and Wellness Fair, which drew over 590 attendees. More than 150 native seed packets and pollinator planting guides were distributed.



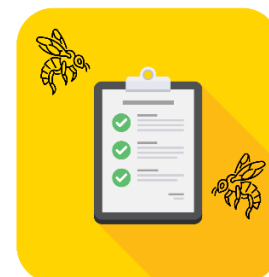
Figure 2. Attendees at the Pollinator Party in Minneapolis learn about beekeeping. Photo by EQB

Department of Natural Resources

New State Wildlife Action Plan. The [Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2025-2035: Conserving Habitats and Biodiversity](#) went through public review and was finalized in 2025. More invertebrates than ever before are represented in the revised list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

- **New accomplishments from the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS).**

- MBS staff conducted bee surveys in 2024 focusing on species that need certain plants to complete their life cycle. They found over 112 species including new populations of several specialist bees.
- New bees recorded in Minnesota. In 2025, staff discovered two new state records of *Florilegus condignus* and *Diadasia australis*. Neither genus had previously been recorded in Minnesota.



- **Nongame Wildlife Program updates.**

- Staff monitored bumble bee and butterfly responses to prairie restorations for the fourth season in 2024. Results show restorations support diverse communities of bumble bees and butterflies. Surveys continued in 2025 of augmented native plantings on the restored portion of Prairie Marshes Wildlife Management Area.
- Staff monitored bumble bee and butterfly responses to innovative cattle grazing at Hole-in-Mountain Wildlife Management Area for the second season in 2025. Data will be processed in winter 2025-2026.

Native plant seed production. Continued production of pollinator specific native seed at Minneopa State Park native plant nursery, with roughly \$8,000 worth of seed harvested to supplement plantings throughout state parks in southern Minnesota.



Figure 3. A prairie field with diverse grasses and flowers in bloom. Photo by Monarch Joint Venture

- **New pollinator-friendly plantings and protections.**
 - Flandrau and Sibley State Parks completed large landscaping projects in popular use areas to showcase pollinator-friendly plantings.
 - The rustic campground at Flandrau State Park remains closed until Memorial Day each year to protect a large aggregation of nesting native bees (genus *Colletes*).
- **Community science and outreach events.**
 - DNR continues to support and participate in the Midwest Bumble Bee Atlas.
 - DNR continues to interact with thousands of attendees at the State Fair, Minneapolis Monarch Festival, and other pollinator themed events.
 - Staff distributed ~12,000 native seed packets in 2025.

Department of Agriculture

- **Pesticide label review.** Reviewed Minnesota registered neonicotinoid pesticide product labels with non-agricultural uses. Information reviewed was used to help guide Agricultural Chemical Inspectors during seasonal use inspections. This guidance highlights the active ingredients, and associated trade names, providing timelines and targets for non-agricultural uses of neonicotinoid products registered within Minnesota.
- **Seed survey.** The MDA administered a voluntary survey to seed labelers to determine to what extent seed purchasers have access to insecticide-free seed. The survey led to a publicly [available list of Minnesota locations offering insecticide free agricultural seed](#).
- **Outreach to beekeepers.** Reached several hundred beekeepers (commercial and hobbyists) through talks and events. Pesticide misuse reporting was highlighted as a way for beekeepers to document off-target pesticide impacts and potentially recoup financial losses from honey bee colonies impacted by pesticides.

- **Outreach document revisions.** Revised two outreach documents focused on highlighting non-pesticide pest control methods, and the pollinator/environmental concerns associated with pesticide use. The revised document *Make Your Yard Bee-Friendly* provides more pollinator friendly plants and plant characteristics (sunlight requirements, bloom period). The revised *Stewardship Guidelines and Best Management Practices for Pesticide Treated Seed* document condenses information to one page with a focus on planting and disposal best practices.
- **New translations.** Continued translating pollinator best management practice documents into more languages: Hmong, Somali, and Spanish.

Department of Transportation

- **New Seed Mixes.** Began using new MnDOT standard seed mixes in 2025, which will improve establishment of native vegetation on construction projects.
- **Pollinator Educational Signage.** Installed new educational signage and planted bee lawn at renovated St. Croix Rest Area on I-94 in Washington County.
- **Monitored monarch butterfly habitat.** Monitored over 60 sites across the state for milkweed density in accordance with the Monarch Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA).
- **New interpretative pollinator sign and bee lawn.** Installed new educational signage and planted bee lawn at renovated St. Croix Rest Area on I-94 in Washington County.
- **Green Stormwater Infrastructure.** Developed and published kits that will encourage increased use of native vegetation features in urban settings.
- **Pollinator habitat management.** MnDOT continued to utilize prescribed fire on lands it administers with an emphasis on areas with rare native plant communities and areas planted with native seed. Over 950 acres were managed with prescribed fires in 2025.



Figure 4. A group of monarch butterflies overwintering in a fir forest in Mexico. Photo by Monarch Joint Venture

Minnesota Zoological Garden

- **Recovery programs for endangered pollinators.** Continued support of [The Pollinator Conservation Initiative](#) for the recovery of endangered pollinators through foundational rearing, breeding, and release programs, as well as wild population monitoring and surveys of habitat conditions. Highlights include:
 - After nearly going extinct as recently as 2022, the last US populations of the Poweshiek skipperling in Michigan (MI) appear to be rising for the first time in decades. This is likely tied to the efforts of the Minnesota Zoo's Pollinator Conservation Initiative and their partner John Ball Zoo (Grand Rapids, MI) which are now producing and releasing 1,200+ adult skipperlings annually. This success is raising hope for the eventual return of this "Most Minnesotan" butterfly back to Minnesota.
 - The Minnesota Zoo released more than 400 Dakota skippers at Glacial Lakes State Park in 2025. Minnesota Zoo scientists also confirmed the presence of dozens of wild adult skippers at the park; these are the product of the 2024 release effort, and they confirm for the first time that individuals released by the Minnesota Zoo are surviving and producing new generations in the wild. Unfortunately, the Dakota skipper propagation program has now been paused for the foreseeable future due to changes in federal funding, permissions, and logistical constraints.
- **Recognition for leadership and contributions in pollinator conservation.**
 - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service honored Minnesota Zoo's scientists Dr. Erik Runquist and Cale Nordmeyer as 2024 National Recovery Champions for the Midwest Region. This award recognizes these staff member's leadership and direct contributions to the recovery programs of the United States Endangered Poweshiek skipperling and Threatened Dakota skipper through foundational propagation and release programs that they helped develop and execute.
 - The Association of Zoos and Aquariums independently honored the Minnesota Zoo, John Ball Zoo, and Assiniboine Park Conservancy (Winnipeg, Manitoba) with Top Honors for the 2025 North American Conservation Award for their joint efforts to help pull the Poweshiek skipperling back from the edge of extinction and towards a path to recovery.

Stories of success

The stories in this section highlight the importance of the collaboration across sectors to protect pollinators. From sharing data and information to inform pollinator protection strategies, to the importance of grassroots efforts to create pollinator habitat in public areas, working together yield the best results.

A new interactive map for the Living Landscapes Initiative

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Living Landscape Initiative combines the agency's programs to support wildlife species, build corridors and increase resiliency. The BWSR Living Landscape map was created to guide BWSR efforts to protect at-risk wildlife, increase landscape resiliency, and expand habitat corridors along waterways, roads and utility corridors. The purpose of the map is to guide decision making for the BWSR Living Landscapes Initiative including project selection for individual conservation programs.

The map combines several layers of information to help guide conservation programs with considerations for habitat benefits across landscapes. Base layers include the DNR Wildlife Action Map that prioritizes important habitat areas; potential dispersal areas for the rusty patched bumble bee as derived from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MnDOT highways prioritized as part of the Monarch Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), Habitat Friendly Utility Corridors, and the location of highest density BWSR funded easement and habitat projects. The map will be updated periodically to add new habitat corridors that are being developed across the state.

Living Landscape Priority Areas Map

The map helps guide BWSR programs to protect at-risk wildlife, increase landscape resiliency, and enhance habitat in environmental justice areas.

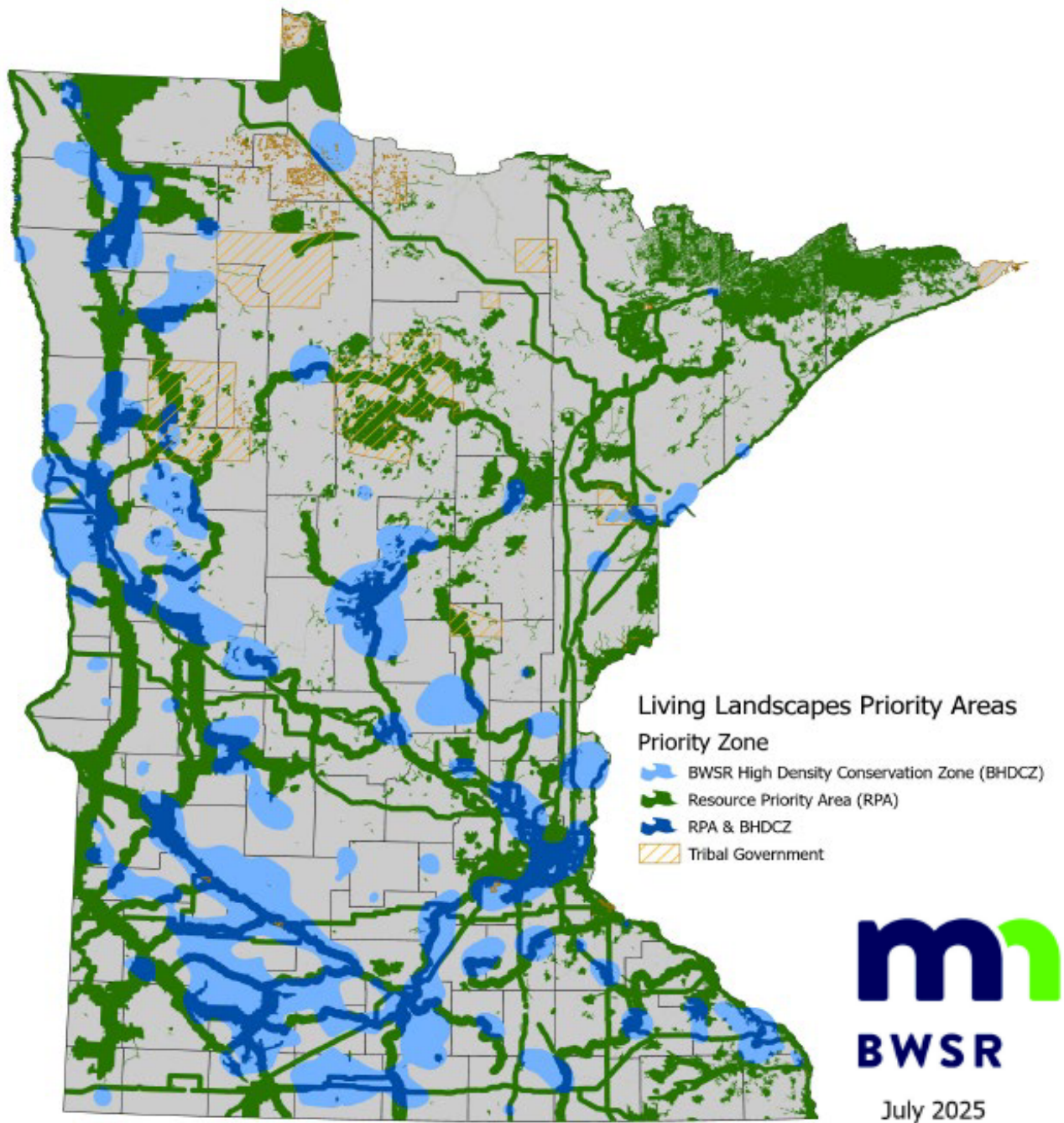


Figure 5. Map showing the Living Landscapes Priority Areas in Minnesota.

New pollinator habitat along I-35 at Duluth's Thompson Hill Information Center

Duluth's Thompson Hill Information Center offers spectacular views of the city skyline, surrounding area and Lake Superior. It's a welcoming spot for residents and the traveling public alike. Now another group of travelers, monarch butterflies, will find respite at this rest area. In June 2025, a group of volunteers from Conservation Minnesota, Duluth Monarch Buddies and the Wild Ones Arrowhead Chapter planted a milkweed field and a small pollinator garden at this popular site. While the monarch is Minnesota's state butterfly, they are not as easy to find as they used to be due to habitat loss and fragmentation. Habitat improvements like this one are important to support monarchs migrating from Mexico to Canada along I-35, also called "The Monarch Highway." The work was done under MnDOT's Highway Sponsorship Program, in conjunction with the Site Development Unit and District One.

The Highway Sponsorship Program forms public-private partnerships to enhance highway roadsides for improved aesthetics, environmental sustainability and habitat improvement. Projects are two to ten years long and are funded by the sponsor. Individuals and organizations can reach out to MnDOT for more info if they have an idea that will help our roadsides!

Project highlights

- Installation and on-going care of a native plant garden for pollinators outside the Visitor Center building.
- Mass milkweed planting in a field near the site entrance, with other fields to be added.
- Monarch caterpillars spotted on the milkweed just four weeks later!

Figure 6.
Volunteers
planting
pollinator
friendly plants
at the
Thompson Hill
Information
Center. Photo
by Paul Dolan



New EPA Insecticide Strategy: Reducing Insecticide Exposure to Listed and Non-listed Species

In April 2025, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the [final insecticide strategy](#) outlining its plans to strengthen pesticide label requirements to better protect listed species from off-target movement of pesticides. The strategy focuses on preemptive mitigations to prevent population-level impacts on more than 900 listed species and their habitats. Many of these new label mitigations apply to all product applications, which should reduce pesticide exposure to non-listed species living near application sites. New insecticide labels will require pesticide applicators to follow a [list of steps](#) aimed at reducing drift and run-off/erosion exposures before using the product. Mitigations are tailored to individual use sites, considering wind directions, pesticide product runoff vulnerability, field characteristics (slope, soil type), and grower management practices (subsurface drainage, edge of field practices, etc.) New insecticide strategy requirements are being applied to product labels during EPA's active ingredient registration/reregistration (conducted every 15 years) process.

Applicators also will need to determine if they are applying a pesticide within a pesticide use limitation area (PULA). PULAs are areas known to be home to listed species or their habitat. Currently, [Minnesota has several PULAs](#) where pesticide applicators are required to follow additional requirements beyond the new label requirements noted above. Over the coming years, as the EPA continues to review and update pesticide registrations, we will see more pesticide product labels tailored toward keeping the animals and plants that call Minnesota home better protected from agricultural pesticide use.

Call to action

The loss of pollinators is a complex problem that needs the collaboration and partnership between the different sectors of society to make significant progress. Through the interagency team, Minnesota has an official coordinated effort to protect pollinators, and the Framework provides a guide to take action, participate, and support programs and initiatives that will create a Minnesota with thriving and diverse pollinator populations.

Through this report, the interagency team extends the invitation to the public to take action to protect pollinators in Minnesota, our collective effort can make a difference!

Appendix 1. Implementation matrix of the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework

This implementation matrix covers those actions included in the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework that state agencies can lead and encourage. Interagency team members used the following categories to indicate the status of each action or project led by their agency.

- *Sustained effort*: ongoing projects or actions that do not have an end date, or are part of the core duties of an agency
- *Completed*: projects or actions that have reached their goals and are no longer active
- *In progress*: ongoing projects or actions that have a specific end date
- *On hold*: projects or actions waiting to be initiated by the lead agency

The matrix is organized by each of the pollinator protection goals and the desired outcome.

Goal 1. Lands throughout Minnesota support healthy, diverse and abundant pollinator populations

Key outcome: More food sources, nesting, and overwintering sites for pollinators

Table 1. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 1, Category “Intentional land stewardship”, Subcategory “Protect pollinator habitat”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Work with public land managers, private landowners and land stewards to identify and protect existing pollinator habitat	Reinvest in Minnesota, Living Landscapes Priority Area Mapping effort, Lawns to Legumes, and Habitat Enhancement Landscape programs	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Metro Blooms, public and private landowners	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Work with public land managers, private landowners and land stewards to identify and protect existing pollinator habitat	This is a core duty of DNR. Management and reconstruction activities on state lands must abide by pollinator best management practices.	DNR	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Work with public land managers, private landowners and land stewards to identify and protect existing pollinator habitat	Developed working group representing pesticide applicator stakeholders. The goal of the working group is to coordinate outreach and education efforts to ensure all of Minnesota's pesticide applicators, including public, private landowners and stewards, are aware of and understand how to comply with new Endangered Species Act (ESA) pesticide label language. A primary focus of new ESA label language is to keep pesticides on their target site (i.e. minimize drift, runoff and erosion) and prevent pesticide exposure to lands where endangered species, like the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee, are known to have populations or habitat.	MDA	Lead and encourage	Agricultural commodity groups, Pesticide industries, Agricultural cooperatives, University of Minnesota (UMN) extension Pesticide Safety Environmental Educators Crop advisors	In progress
Work with public land managers, private landowners and land stewards to identify and protect existing pollinator habitat	Encourage and incentivize agricultural land managers and owners to obtain wildlife endorsement through Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program. Wildlife endorsement certification requires evaluation of land cover attributes including the land's ability to: preserve food sources, nesting cover, support species diversity, and the land managers ability to incorporate integrated pest management and minimizing land disturbance.	MDA	Lead and encourage	Soil Water Conservation Districts, National Resource Conservation Service, Monarch joint venture, Fish and Wildlife Services, The Nature Conservancy, Crop advisors, Private consultants, and the MN Department of Natural Resources.	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Work with public land managers, private landowners and land stewards to identify and protect existing pollinator habitat	Mapping and creating vegetation management plans for areas of right of way that contain native grasses and forbs	MnDOT	Lead and encourage	Counties, SWCD	In progress
Work with public land managers, private landowners and land stewards to identify and protect existing pollinator habitat	Highway Sponsorship Program that allows interested parties to manage native vegetation on MnDOT rights of way	MnDOT	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained Effort
Work with public land managers, private landowners and land stewards to identify and protect existing pollinator habitat	Install signage to help protect high quality habitats where needed	MnDOT	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained Effort
Expand and improve compensation rates for DNR's Prairie Bank Program	The Minnesota Legislature passed higher compensation rates in April 2024	DNR	Lead	Not applicable	Completed
Revise lighting guidelines in state-administered facilities to reduce light pollution detrimental to pollinators	Revising ADMIN's guidelines and protocols	ADMIN	Lead	Not applicable	In progress
Revise lighting guidelines in state-administered facilities to reduce light pollution detrimental to pollinators	Approved product evaluation for lighting includes criteria for minimal impacts for light pollution	MnDOT	Lead	Not applicable	In progress
Revise lighting guidelines in state-administered facilities to reduce light pollution detrimental to pollinators	Participating in national research efforts to evaluate the effects of transportation lighting, which includes a wildlife component	MnDOT	Lead	Varies by project	In progress

Table 2. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 1, Category “Intentional land stewardship”, Subcategory “Restore and create pollinator habitat”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way	Utility rights-of-way through Habitat Friendly Utilities	BWSR	Encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way	Highway Sponsorship Program that allows interested parties to manage native vegetation on MnDOT rights of way	MnDOT	Encourage	Local civil groups	Sustained effort
Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way	Planting pollinator habitat at State Entry Signs when possible, meeting the Monarch Waystation criteria when able	MnDOT	Encourage	Not applicable	In progress
Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way	Install native seeds following construction projects as identified in MnDOT's Sustainability Plan	MnDOT	Encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way	Update MnDOT Seeding Manual to emphasize the use of native grasses and forbs	MnDOT	Encourage	BWSR and DNR part of the review team	Completed

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Expand beneficial reuse at state-managed Closed Landfill Program sites and promote opportunities to partner with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to facilitate pollinator habitat creation on closed landfill sites	Installation of native plant seed mixes on 380 acres of land on 5 closed landfill sites. Maintenance is ongoing	MPCA	Lead	Minnesota Native Landscapes, BWSR	In progress
Engage public land managers to convert lawn or unused spaces and new developments to pollinator habitat (e.g., expanding the capacity of the Lawns to Legumes (L2L) Program to include public lands)	Lawns to Legumes Program, Pollinator Pathways, Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program, Habitat Friendly Utilities	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	In progress
Support and expand existing programs that provide incentives for farmers and foresters that implement pollinator-friendly land management practices (e.g., diversified crop production, no till, cover crops, prairie strips, forest thinning, wildlife openings, etc.)	Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program, Soil Health Cost-share Program, Watershed Based Implementation Funding, Alliance for Climate Smart Ag, Clean Water Funds Projects and Practices, Clean Water Fund Legacy Partners, RIM for Working Lands, Conservation Contracts, Farm Bill Assistance Partnership	BWSR	Lead	DNR, Pheasants Forever	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Support and expand existing programs that provide incentives for farmers and foresters that implement pollinator-friendly land management practices (e.g., diversified crop production, no till, cover crops, prairie strips, forest thinning, wildlife openings, etc.)	Minnesota Water Quality Certification Program endorsements (Wildlife, Integrated Pest Management, Climate Smart, Soil Health) have components that incentivize farmers to implement more pollinator-friendly land management practices including implementing filter strips, cover crops, modifying tillage practices, crop rotation, use integrated pest management, and choosing less toxic pesticide products when possible.	MDA	Lead and encourage	Soil Water Conservation Districts, National Resource Conservation Service, UMN Extension Crop advisors, Private consultants	Sustained effort
Promote the installation of a certain percentage of pollinator-friendly landscaping in new developments	Included in development guidelines	ADMIN	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	In progress
Promote the installation of a certain percentage of pollinator-friendly landscaping in new developments	Have developed and promoted technical resources	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Update state building design guidelines to consider pollinator habitat for new buildings and major renovations	Revising ADMIN's guidelines	ADMIN	Lead	Not applicable	In progress

Table 3. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 1, Category “Intentional land stewardship”, Subcategory “Enhance the quality of existing pollinator habitat”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Continue prioritizing the use of native plants in state-managed landscapes	Core practices of the agency	ADMIN	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	Sustained effort
Continue prioritizing the use of native plants in state-managed landscapes	Provide landscape design to state owned property, Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program, Reinvest in Minnesota, and Wetland Banking	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Continue prioritizing the use of native plants in state-managed landscapes	Prioritizing native plants is standard practice on DNR-managed lands	DNR	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	Sustained effort
Continue prioritizing the use of native plants in state-managed landscapes	See action “Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way”	MnDOT	Lead and encourage	See action “Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way”	Sustained effort
Continue prioritizing the use of non-chemical habitat management tools in state-managed landscapes	Part of the core duties of the agency	ADMIN	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	Sustained effort
Continue prioritizing the use of non-chemical habitat management tools in state-managed landscapes	Expand signage that highlights non-chemical management options (goats, fire, cutting)	DNR	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	On hold

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Continue prioritizing the use of non-chemical habitat management tools in state-managed landscapes	Expand MnDOT's Prescribed Fire Program to Districts where prairie habitat exists	MnDOT	Lead and encourage	Varies by project, DNR	Sustained effort
Continue prioritizing the use of non-chemical habitat management tools in state-managed landscapes	Use of Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management including mowing and biological control	MnDOT	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Continue prioritizing the use of non-chemical habitat management tools in state-managed landscapes	Part of the core practices of the agency	Minnesota Zoo	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	Sustained effort
Promote the use of farming, forestry and other land management practices that provide multiple benefits to soil, water and wildlife	All BWSR Programming.	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Promote the use of farming, forestry and other land management practices that provide multiple benefits to soil, water and wildlife	This is standard practice for DNR-managed lands	DNR	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Promote the use of farming, forestry and other land management practices that provide multiple benefits to soil, water and wildlife	MN Ag. Water Quality Certification Program (Soil Health, Wildlife, IPM, Climate Smart, Irrigation Water Management Endorsements): Each of these endorsements has a different emphasis but they all share the goal of improving management practices for agricultural lands	MDA	Lead and encourage	Soil Water Conservation Districts, National Resource Conservation Service, UMN Extension Crop advisors, Private consultants	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Promote the use of farming, forestry and other land management practices that provide multiple benefits to soil, water and wildlife	<p>Pesticide Management Plan (PMP) and associated actions:</p> <p>The PMP outlines the MDA's approach to prevent, evaluate, and mitigate pesticides and their breakdown products in water. The MDA's approach involves developing and promoting best management practices that will protect water quality for wildlife and humans. Monitoring for pesticides in water is another key component of the PMP that guides the MDA in their management of pesticides. The MDA works to educate farmers and land managers about pesticide impacts (i.e. sharing monitoring data) and encourages the adoption of alternatives and practices that will minimize impacts to the environment.</p>	MDA	Lead and encourage	<p>Pesticide Management Plan Committee:</p> <p>Consists of representatives from MDH, MNDNR, MPCA, Pesticide Industry, Environmental Organization, Farm Organization, Farmers (2), UMN Extension (2), Public members (3), Tribal Representative, Urban Pesticide Specialist</p>	Sustained effort
Promote the use of farming, forestry and other land management practices that provide multiple benefits to soil, water and wildlife	<p>MDA's grant programs include, Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Research, and Specialty Crop Block Program grants. Each of these programs overlaps with the goal to "promote the use of farming, forestry and other land management practices by provide multiple benefits to soil, water and wildlife" through supporting, developing and disseminating sustainability practices—such as cover crops, conservation tillage, nutrient and pest management—that enhance soil health, reduce runoff, and benefit ecosystem services.</p>	MDA	Lead and encourage	<p>Nonprofit organizations, Producer organizations, Government agencies, Universities, Tribal organizations, other agricultural groups, or other groups with agricultural research capabilities</p>	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Encourage peer-to-peer workshops focused on incorporating and protecting pollinator habitat on working lands	Habitat friendly solar, Technical Training Certification Program, BWSR Academy, Watershed Implementation, Minnesota Wetland Professional Certification Program, Watershed Implementors monthly call, monthly Tech Talks	BWSR	Encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Encourage peer-to-peer workshops focused on incorporating and protecting pollinator habitat on working lands	DNR staff lead and participate in occasional peer-to-peer events	DNR	Encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Encourage peer-to-peer workshops focused on incorporating and protecting pollinator habitat on working lands	Webinars promoting pollinator friendly landscaping and landscape management	EQB	Encourage	Varies by project	In progress
Ensure guidance for long-term management of pollinator habitat is available to the public	Pollinator Toolbox, Wetland Restoration Guide, Vegetative Establishment Guide, Easement Vegetative Guide, What's Working guide	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Ensure guidance for long-term management of pollinator habitat is available to the public	Pollinator best management practices document is currently undergoing revision	DNR	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	In progress

Table 4. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 1, Category “Strategic policy and programs to protect, restore, create, and enhance pollinator habitat”, Subcategory “Develop policy and programs to increase native plant supply”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Create a state native seed program with an emphasis on early season species	Pending	DNR	Lead	Pending	On hold
Update the seed mixes and related guidance with emphasis on pollinator benefits	See action “Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way”	MnDOT	Lead	See action “Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way”	Completed
Collaborate with and support seed and native plant vendors and other partners to increase the production of plant species important to pollinators (including trees and shrubs)	BWSR Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Advisory Team	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Around 50 conservation organizations	In progress
Collaborate with and support seed and native plant vendors and other partners to increase the production of plant species important to pollinators (including trees and shrubs)	DNR maintains a list of native plant suppliers, and supports vendors as seed and plant sources for habitat restoration and enhancement projects	DNR	Lead and encourage	Native plant suppliers	Sustained effort
Support and expand the state forest nursery efforts to include a wide diversity of pollinator-friendly plants (e.g., flowering trees and shrubs)	Core operations of the state’s forest nursery	DNR	Lead	Not applicable	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Provide funding to diversify seed mixes used in private land restorations	Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program, Habitat friendly utilities, Reinvest in Minnesota/Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program	BWSR	Lead	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Provide funding to diversify seed mixes used in private land restorations	Pending	DNR	Lead	Pending	On hold

Table 5. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 1, Category “Strategic policy and programs to protect, restore, create, and enhance pollinator habitat”, Subcategory “Design strategies to support pollinator habitat”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Develop guidance about integrated habitat management approaches in public and private lands	Seed mixes, planting templates, Living Landscape Initiative programs	BWSR	Encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Develop guidance about integrated habitat management approaches in public and private lands	Pollinator best management practices revision	DNR	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	In progress

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Develop guidance about integrated habitat management approaches in public and private lands	The MDA formed three pollinator habitat working groups in 2016 to develop BMPs for Agricultural Lands, Yards and Gardens, and Rights of Way. The MDA followed up these efforts in 2025 to revise a shorter private land owners document titled "Make Your Yard Bee-Friendly". Both the Yards and Gardens and Make Your Yard Bee-Friendly documents have been translated into Hmong, Somali, and Spanish to better facilitate outreach efforts. The MDA continues to promote and distribute these BMPs throughout the year.	MDA	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Completed
Develop guidance about integrated habitat management approaches in public and private lands	Update MnDOT Maintenance Manual to reflect habitat management methods	MnDOT	Encourage	Pending	On hold
Develop and implement strategies to increase connectivity of habitat in highly fragmented landscapes	Create map of areas of pollinator habitat opportunities to connect fragmented landscapes along MnDOT managed roads	BWSR	Lead and encourage	See Stories of Success "A new interactive map for the Living Landscapes Initiative"	Sustained effort
Develop and implement strategies to increase connectivity of habitat in highly fragmented landscapes	Local technical teams, Conservation Focus Areas already exist to implement the Prairie Plan, Wildlife Action Network, etc. There is a need for highlighting and replicating conservation success stories from these efforts.	DNR	Lead and encourage	The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, counties, private landowners, etc.	Sustained effort
Create a certification program for pollinator-friendly landscaping available to landscape and gardening companies	Pending	Pending	Lead and encourage	Pending	On hold

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Develop state regulations to increase remnant prairie protections	Pending	DNR	Lead	Pending	On hold
Develop technical assistance and resources to increase pollinator habitat to support pollination from native pollinator species	Develop technical assistance and resources to increase pollinator habitat to support pollination for native pollinator species	All BWSR Programming	BWSR	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Develop technical assistance and resources to increase pollinator habitat to support pollination for native pollinator species	Developed new resources for landscaping with native plants: Landscaping with native plants Natural shorelines	DNR	Lead and encourage	BWSR	Sustained effort
Develop technical assistance and resources to increase pollinator habitat to support pollination for native pollinator species	See action "Develop guidance about integrated habitat management approaches in public and private lands" Pollinator Habitat BMP documents developed by MDA	MDA	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Completed
Improve coordination and management of DNR rights-of-way to meet pollinator best management practices in alignment with existing goals and objectives	Utility rights-of-way licenses, leases, and easements that cross DNR lands go through an internal review process. Though this process is case-by-case, core vegetation standards have to be met before approval.	DNR	Lead	Not applicable	Sustained effort

Table 6. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 1, Category “Comprehensive research and data collection related to pollinator habitat”, Subcategory “Understand pollinator habitat needs”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Research how habitat management practices affect pollinators populations	Current projects are bee species presence surveys in southwest Minnesota, comparing species assemblages at remnant vs restored prairies	DNR	Lead and encourage	UMN	In progress
Support the development of resources to guide strategic prioritization of implement habitat conservation efforts	DNR has identified Conservation Focus Areas and Wildlife Action Network, published in the State Wildlife Action Plan and available as GIS layers	DNR	Lead and encourage	Partners who helped develop Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan	Completed
Increase capacity to evaluate the quality and success of habitat conservation projects	Pending	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Pending	On hold
Increase capacity to evaluate the quality and success of habitat conservation projects	DNR currently does this on a case-by-case basis but is working to standardize data collection methods through increased use of the Prairie Reconstruction Initiative (PRI) database	DNR	Lead and encourage	PRI, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	In progress
Research the implications to pollinators of including adjacent-pollinator habitat in areas with intensive pesticide use (e.g. golf courses)	DNR wildlife researchers have studied this. See research paper “Tallgrass prairie wildlife exposure to spray drift from commonly used soybean insecticides in Midwestern USA”.	DNR	Encourage	UMN	On hold
Research the implications to pollinators of including adjacent-pollinator habitat in areas with intensive pesticide use (e.g. golf courses)	The MDA collects this type of information when pesticide misuse is reported and when an incident investigation can be initiated	MDA	Encourage	UMN	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Identify low native plant diversity areas on state lands that would be good candidates for prairie or forest restoration or enhancement	DNR does this at the property and unit level	DNR	Lead	Varies by project	Sustained effort

Goal 2. Minnesotans use pesticides judiciously and only when necessary to reduce harm to pollinators while retaining economic strength

Key outcome: reduced impacts to pollinators from pesticides through integrated pest management (IPM)

Table 7. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 2, Category “Judicious use of pesticides”, Subcategory “Support integrated pest management on agricultural and non-agricultural lands”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Develop IPM programs for crops and non-agricultural systems where they do not exist yet	Consults with and encourage University to conduct research	MDA	Encourage	UMN CFANS	Sustained effort
Develop and collect standardized methods to evaluate and analyze the adoption of IPM on Minnesota farms and in non-agricultural systems	Consults with and encourage University to conduct research	MDA	Encourage	UMN CFANS	Sustained effort
Continue funding for projects that include implementation of or research on IPM	Consulted with the UMN to fund research on IPM implementation and development using funding from the Pollinator Research Account (\$188,051)	MDA	Encourage	UMN College of Food Agricultural Natural Resources (CFANS), UMN Entomology Department	Sustained effort
Continue funding for projects that include implementation of or research on IPM	The MDA collaborated with the UMN on the Pollinator Research Account (\$188,051). Currently funded through June 2027.	MDA	Encourage	MN Legislature	Completed

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Continue funding for projects that include implementation of or research on IPM	The MDA administers several grant programs for research that supports crop production, including IPM-related projects. The Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Crop Research Grant generates university level applied crop research that will improve agricultural product quality, quantity, or value. The AGRI Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant funds aims to increase competitiveness of Minnesota-grown specialty crops, including through researching and developing techniques that focus on pest and disease control and prevention.	MDA	Leads	Farmers, nonprofit organizations, producer organizations, government agencies, universities, Tribal organizations, other agricultural groups, or other groups with agricultural research capabilities	Sustained effort
Continue funding for projects that include implementation of or research on IPM	In 2025, the MDA collaborated with the UMN Department of Entomology to fund pesticide soil sample analysis to supplement IPM research projects	MDA	Encourage	UMN Entomology Department	Completed
Continue to strengthen compliance assistance for pollinator and IPM language on pesticide labels	The MDA with support from the UMN Pesticide Safety and Environmental Education continues to educate pesticide applicators on the importance of using IPM and where pollinator specific language can be found on pesticide product labels. The MDA also has Agricultural Chemical Investigators that conduct pesticide use and misuse investigations where compliance assistances is a core component of their investigation.	MDA	Lead and encourage	UMN Pesticide Safety and Environmental Education	Sustained effort

Table 8. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 2, Category “Judicious use of pesticides”, Subcategory “Promote integrated pest management on agricultural and non-agricultural lands”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Increase integrated pest management education for all pesticide users	All DNR pesticide users are required to do annual training with IPM as a core focus. New information can be distributed to training teams in each DNR division.	DNR	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	Sustained effort
Increase integrated pest management education for all pesticide users	Pesticide Recertification Workshops: Work with UMN Pesticide Safety and Environmental Educators to incorporate integrated pest management concepts and practices into pesticide applicator trainings. Training includes how to find / understand pollinator label warnings and application restrictions when crops are blooming.	MDA	Encourage	UMN Extension Pesticide Safety and Environmental Education	Sustained effort
Increase integrated pest management education for all pesticide users	Manual updates: Pesticide applicator training manuals are routinely updated to ensure current pesticide use concerns can be address. Integrated pest management and pollinator protection concerns are highlighted.	MDA	Encourage	UMN Extension Pesticide Safety and Environmental Education	Sustained effort
Collaborate to create and distribute signage about the use of integrated pest management and reducing risks to pollinators for different settings	Pending	ADMIN	Lead and encourage	Pending	On hold
Collaborate to create and distribute signage about the use of integrated pest management and reducing risks to pollinators for different settings	DNR has signage that focuses on pollinators and non-chemical management options (goats, fire, cutting) though not IPM explicitly	DNR	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	On hold

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Collaborate to create and distribute signage about the use of integrated pest management and reducing risks to pollinators for different settings	Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program has developed a specific integrated pest management endorsement for farmers and land managers that record and incorporate sufficient alternative, non-pesticide, pest management practices in an effort to suppress, prevent, and avoid pest populations reaching levels that cause economic harm.	MDA	Lead and encourage	Minnesota farmers, crop advisors, private consultants, and land managers	Sustained effort

Table 9. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 2, Category “Judicious use of pesticides”, Subcategory “Support integrated pest management in managed pollinator colonies”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Continue to fund projects that include research on or implementation of integrated pest management	Consults with and encourage University to conduct research	MDA	Encourage	UMN CFANS	Sustained effort
Continue to strengthen and support compliance assistance for legal pesticide use	Conduct outreach to Minnesota beekeepers. Focus messaging on issues around illegal hive pesticide use, signs and symptoms of honey bee exposure to non-beekeeper applied pesticides and available investigation and compensation options.	MDA	Encourage	Minnesota based beekeeping organizations including Minnesota Honey Producers Association and Minnesota Hobby Beekeepers Association	In progress
Continue to strengthen and support compliance assistance for legal pesticide use	Continue outreach through bee kill investigations. Compliance assistance is always a focus during bee kill investigations for both beekeepers (complainants) and non-beekeeper (alleged responsible parties) pesticide applicators working in the surrounding area.	MDA	Lead and encourage	UMN bee lab (outreach)	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Promote the use of existing integrated pest management programs	Encourage and promote regional recommendations	MDA	Encourage	UMN Bee Lab, MN Beekeeper associations	In progress
Provide education on integrated pest management for pollinator colony health	Encourage and promote regional and national best practices for honey bee colony health	MDA	Encourage	UMN Bee Lab, Honey bee Health Coalition, MN Beekeeper associations	In progress

Table 10. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 2, “Robust protections”, Subcategory “Reduce off target movement of pesticides”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Increase promotion of mitigation strategies to reduce pesticide movement off-site, including promoting reduction of dust-off from treated seed	Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program focuses on implementation, and maintenance of conservation practices that protect Minnesota's water resources, including protections from nutrient and pesticide off-site movement through voluntary incentives and coordinated help from conservation professionals	MDA	Lead and encourage	Soil Water Conservation Districts, National Resource Conservation Service, UMN Extension, Crop advisors, Private consultants	Sustained effort
Increase promotion of mitigation strategies to reduce pesticide movement off-site, including promoting reduction of dust-off from treated seed	Develop outreach materials and conduct outreach on the Environmental Protection Agencies new strategies for protecting endangered species from pesticides	MDA	Lead and encourage	UMN Pesticide Safety and Environmental Education, USEPA, NRCS, UMN Extension	In progress

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Increase promotion of mitigation strategies to reduce pesticide movement off-site, including promoting reduction of dust-off from treated seed	Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program increased outreach to program participants on off-target movement and impacts from insecticide coated treated seed	MDA	Lead and encourage	Crop advisors, Private consultants, Soil and Water Conservation Districts	In progress
Expand promotion of existing best management practices for using and disposing of treated seed	Expand outreach on Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) treated seed disposal requirements to treated seed retailers and labelers	MDA	Lead and encourage	Commodity groups, Seed retailers / labelers	In progress
Expand promotion of existing best management practices for using and disposing of treated seed	Continue promoting best management practice documents related to treated seed treatment, use, and disposal by incorporating training modules into category H: treated seed applicator certification training	MDA	Lead and encourage	UMN Extension Pesticide Safety and Environmental Education	In progress

Table 11. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 2, “Robust protections”, Subcategory “Report pesticide misuse”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Increase awareness about pesticide misuse reporting	Conduct more outreach to Minnesota beekeepers to make them aware of pesticide exposure symptoms, reporting, and state compensation options	MDA	Lead and encourage	UMN Bee Lab, MN beekeeper associations	In progress
Strengthen capacity to investigate pesticide misuse reports	Backfill regional Agricultural Chemical Investigator positions and realign unit structure to better strengthen the MDA's capacity to investigate pesticide misuse reports	MDA	Lead	Only MDA has compliance assistance authority	In progress

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Strengthen capacity to investigate pesticide misuse reports	Strengthen technical expertise of bee kill investigation staff through professional network development and trainings held by the Apiary Inspectors of America	MDA	Lead	Apiary Inspectors of America	Sustained effort

Table 12. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 2, “Focused research”, Subcategory “Study the effects of pesticides and pesticide inert ingredients on pollinators and their habitat”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Conduct native pollinator species pesticide toxicity studies following EPA guidelines that can be used in risk analyses	Consults with and encourage University to conduct research	MDA	Encourage	UMN CFANS	Sustained effort
Conduct studies on the effects of pesticide inert ingredients on pollinators following EPA guidelines that can be used in risk analyses	Consults with and encourage University to conduct research	MDA	Encourage	UMN CFANS	Sustained effort
Conduct studies on how pesticides interact with each other and other stressors to affect pollinator health following EPA guidelines that can be used in risk analyses	Consults with and encourage University to conduct research	MDA	Encourage	UMN CFANS	Sustained effort
Create new or update outdated thresholds for common pests in Minnesota	Consults with and encourage University to conduct research	MDA	Encourage	UMN CFANS	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Research and document obstacles pest managers face to adopt IPM and what factors lead to increased adoption	Consults with and encourage University to conduct research	MDA	Encourage	UMN CFANS	Sustained effort

Goal 3. Minnesotans understand, value, and actively support pollinators

Key outcome: More action through community commitments

Table 13. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 3, Category “Strong partnership and relationship building”, Subcategory “Build intentional relationships with individuals and organizations for pollinator protection”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Connect with communities that have adopted pollinator-friendly resolutions to learn from their experiences and strategize ways to engage cities that have not participated	Conversations with city staff	EQB	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	In progress
Strengthen relationships with non-profit and for-profit organizations that work to protect pollinators	Co-sponsoring the North American Monarch Summit	EQB	Lead	Monarch Joint Venture	Completed
Strengthen relationships with non-profit and for-profit organizations that work to protect pollinators	Participate in pollinator-related outreach events organized by different reputable organizations	EQB	Lead	Varies by project	Sustained effort

Table 14. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 3, Category “Strong partnership and relationship building”, Subcategory “Build strategic partnerships to advance pollinator protection goals”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Collaborate with GreenSteps Cities program to increase education and promotion of pollinator-friendly practices	Organizing the City to city on pollinators webinar	EQB	Lead	GreenSteps Cities program (MPCA)	In progress
Collaborate with stores that sell retail pesticides and flowering plants to include information and resources about how to protect pollinators and their habitat	Developed and maintain a list of pollinator lethal pesticides for use by retailers and cities with ordinances prohibiting use of pollinator lethal insecticides	MDA	Lead and encourage	Nurseries	Sustained effort
Collaborate with stores that sell retail pesticides and flowering plants to include information and resources about how to protect pollinators and their habitat	Provide treated seed retailers summarized best practice information for customers. This information is required to be posted in an accessible, visible location	MDA	Lead and encourage	Treated seed labelers and retailers including big box stores	In progress
Create a process with Tribal Nations to work together on pollinator protection	Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program and Habitat Friendly Utilities, Lawns to Legumes Programs	BWSR	Lead	MNTEC, MNTEC Tribal Governments (varies by project)	Sustained effort
Create a process with Tribal Nations to work together on pollinator protection	Pending	EQB	Lead	MNTEC, state agencies' Tribal liaisons	On hold

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Collaborate with the Minnesota Science Teachers Association to promote pollinator educational resources for use in K-12 classrooms	Pollinator Pathways	BWSR	Lead and encourage	MDE	In progress
Collaborate with the Minnesota Science Teachers Association to promote pollinator educational resources for use in K-12 classrooms	The School Forest Program has capacity to increase pollinator efforts, particularly around trees. Strong desire to continue distributing native seed packets to schools.	DNR	Lead and encourage	Schools and teachers	On hold

Table 15. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 3, Category “Diverse and inclusive public participation”, Subcategory “Increase participation in initiatives and programs”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Assess which communities have not been involved in pollinator protection actions, reach out to them, and learn how to align this subject with their community priorities	Lawns to Legumes Program survey	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Blue Thumb, Audubon	Sustained effort

Table 16. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 3, Category “Informed communities”, Subcategory “Effective public access to information”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Improve accessibility of pollinator protection resources (i.e., translations)	Lawns to Legumes Program	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Blue Thumb Washington SWCD	Sustained effort
Improve accessibility of pollinator protection resources (i.e., translations)	Work to translate MDA BMPs and outreach materials into multiple languages	MDA	Lead and encourage	Enterprise Translations Office	Completed

Table 17. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 3, Category “Informed communities”, Subcategory “Increase public awareness about pollinator needs and ways to help them”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Leverage Pollinator Week to raise awareness about pollinator protection through different strategies: pollinator costume contest, pollinator garden sign design contest, webinar series with pollinator experts, etc.	Social media campaign, but potential for organizing other events	EQB	Lead and encourage	Interagency team-member agencies, UMN Bee Lab, Xerces Society, Monarch Joint Venture, other pollinator-friendly non-profit organizations	In progress
Promote pollinator-related apps (i.e. Bumble Bee Watch, iNaturalist) at community events	Refer to them in Lawns to Legumes Program trainings and at tabling events	BWSR	Encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Promote pollinator protection actions at the State Fair	Partnered with Blue Thumb and MPCA to host a table outside the Eco Experience building to promote pollinator conservation	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Blue Thumb	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Promote pollinator protection actions at the State Fair	Improve signage identifying plants in the DNR gardens	DNR	Lead and encourage	Not applicable	In progress
Promote pollinator protection actions at the State Fair	Continue offering guided plant ID walks and/or tabling events for Pollinator Day at the State Fair	DNR	Lead and encourage	Interagency-member agencies, UMN Bee Lab, Xerces Society, Monarch Joint Venture, Pheasants Forever, other pollinator non-profit organizations	Sustained effort
Promote pollinator protection actions at the State Fair	Pollinator Day at the State Fair	EQB	Lead and encourage	Interagency-member agencies, UMN Bee Lab, Xerces Society, Monarch Joint Venture, other pollinator non-profit organizations	Sustained effort
Provide clear information about how to create and improve pollinator habitat (e.g. increase awareness about mitigating the negative effects of light pollution)	Presentation to special interest groups	BWSR	Lead and encourage	EQB	Sustained effort
Provide information about the benefits to wildlife of using native vs non-native plants	Presentation to special interest groups and program policies	BWSR	Lead and encourage	EQB	Sustained effort
Increase visibility of pollinator-friendly lawn alternatives (e.g., media campaign that shows what pollinator habitat looks like)	Pending	EQB	Lead and encourage	Interagency pollinator protection team	On hold

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Review local ordinances and coordinate with municipalities to make those ordinances compatible with adopting pollinator friendly landscaping	Pending	EQB	Encourage	Pending	On hold

Table 18. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 3, Category “Sustained education and training”, Subcategory “Strengthen programs with pollinator protection resources and information”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Develop an interagency communications plan to promote pollinator resources and programs	Featured Plants, Ecological Update	BWSR	Lead	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Develop an interagency communications plan to promote pollinator resources and programs	Developed an interagency communications plan for pollinator-related topics	EQB	Lead	Interagency team-member agencies	Completed
Include pollinator-related education and resources in current agency-led programs where appropriate (e.g., as done in Ag in the Classroom)	Minnesota Wetland Professional Certification Program	BWSR	Lead	SWCDs and Counties	In progress
Include pollinator-related education and resources in current agency-led programs where appropriate (e.g., as done in Ag in the Classroom)	DNR education programs that overlap with pollinator content: Bird by Bird, Project Wild (currently on hold), Scientific and Natural Area program outreach, Parks and Trails Interpretative Program	DNR	Lead	Varies by project	Sustained effort

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Include pollinator-related education and resources in current agency-led programs where appropriate (e.g., as done in Ag in the Classroom)	The Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom provides academic standards-based lesson plans and companion resources to Minnesota K-12 educators through their Curriculum Matrix. This matrix includes over 50 pollinator themed lessons and supporting resources. Pollinator-themed hands-on activities are also embedded in educator professional development opportunities.	MDA	Lead and encourage	School districts, UMN Bee Lab, National Center for Agricultural Literacy, National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization	Sustained effort
Include pollinator-related education and resources in current agency-led programs where appropriate (e.g., as done in Ag in the Classroom)	Continue distributing and discussing pollinator concerns and best practices during outreach events	MDA	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Develop programming in partnership with youth organizations like Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, YMCA, etc. to educate and facilitate pollinator projects and participation in pollinator-related community science projects	Pollinator Pathways/Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program	BWSR	Lead	Varies by project	Sustained effort
Develop programming in partnership with youth organizations like Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, YMCA, etc. to educate and facilitate pollinator projects and participation in pollinator-related community science projects	New regal fritillary monitoring effort using iNaturalist	DNR	Lead	Pending	On hold

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Explore synergies with third-party certification programs that support pollinators and pollinator habitat	Pending	BWSR	Lead	Pending	On hold
Explore synergies with third-party certification programs that support pollinators and pollinator habitat	Keep up with changes in IPM practices required by forest certification organizations	DNR	Lead	Pending	On hold
Work with organizations with expertise to expand pollinator-related education and training for inmates at state-administered facilities (e.g. beekeeping, habitat restoration training)	Pending	MnDOC	Lead	Pending	On hold

Table 19. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for Goal 3, Category “Sustained education and training”, Subcategory “Make pollinator protection educational resources readily available for the public”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Create a hub of pollinator-related curriculum/materials that makes it easy for educators to incorporate in their programs	Pollinator Toolkit	BWSR	Lead	Not applicable	Sustained effort
Encourage members of the Master Gardener’s program to be a resource for schools who want to install pollinator habitat	Pending	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Pending	On hold

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Work with SWCDs to increase pollinator guidance and resources (e.g. pollinator-friendly plants to mitigate flooding)	Tech Training Certification Program	BWSR	Lead	Varies by project	On hold
Increase awareness of programs to assist landowners, land stewards, and land managers in creating, managing, and maintaining pollinator habitat	Table events, public meetings etc.	BWSR	Lead and encourage	Varies by project	Sustained effort

Desired Outcome “Healthy, diverse pollinator populations that sustain and enhance Minnesota’s environment, economy, and way of life”

Table 20. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for the Desired Outcome, Category “Informed decision-making”, Subcategory “Long-term monitoring”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Secure permanent funding to inventory and monitor pollinators	One potential source of funding is Reinvest in Minnesota	DNR	Lead	Pending	On hold
Explore and promote monitoring techniques that don’t require lethal captures	Pending	Pending	Lead and encourage	Pending	On hold

Table 21. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for the Desired Outcome, Category “Informed decision-making”, Subcategory “Generate new information and create a framework for sharing information”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Create a group to develop pollinator-specific research priority list and identify funding streams	DNR does this at project, division, and SWAP levels. New SWAP will be out 2025.	DNR	Lead and encourage	UMN	Sustained effort
Create a group to develop pollinator-specific research priority list and identify funding streams	Pending	EQB	Lead and encourage	Interagency team-member agencies, research institutions (TBD), pollinator-related non-governmental organizations (TBD)	On hold
Develop a framework to facilitate collaboration, data and information sharing about pollinators between organizations	Pending	EQB	Lead and encourage	Interagency team-member agencies	On hold
Research risk of environmental pollutants (e.g., salts and heavy metals) on pollinators	Pending	TBD	Encourage	Pending	On hold
Research the drivers behind changes of perception and behavior toward pollinator-friendly practices to inform state outreach and education efforts	Pending	EQB	Lead and encourage	Pending	On hold

Table 22. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for the Desired Outcome, Category “Strategic protections”, Subcategory “Develop effective policy to protect at-risk pollinator species”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Include a question on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet form that provides information about potential reductions in pollinator habitat and identifies proposed mitigation that will offset those reductions	Pending	EQB	Lead	Pending	On hold
Increase capacity for status assessments of pollinator species (monitoring data) state listing at-risk species (including staffing, taxonomic expertise, and data gathering)	DNR is the lead on state listing at-risk species	DNR	Lead	Pending	On hold

Table 23. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for the Desired Outcome, Category “Long-term planning”, Subcategory “Improve interagency coordination”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Align state agencies’ policies, practices and procedures to effectively protect pollinators and reduce inconsistencies	Ongoing conversations during interagency pollinator protection team meetings	EQB	Lead	Interagency team-member agencies	In progress
Create and maintain an inventory of passed and ongoing pollinator protection programs and initiatives	Pending	EQB	Lead	Interagency team-member agencies	On hold

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Synergize strategies and priorities between the Pollinator and the Climate Action Framework (e.g. integrate pollinator-friendly plants in green infrastructure projects)	Pending	EQB	Lead	Interagency team-member agencies	On hold

Table 24. Implementation matrix of the Pollinator Action Framework for the Desired Outcome, Category “Long-term planning”, Subcategory “Improve intra-agency coordination”.

Action	Projects	Lead agency	Agency role (Lead/Encourage)	Partners	Status
Clarify internal pollinator policies and streamline their implementation across agency actions.	DNR: Pollinator Op Order and Pollinator BMPs and grazing guidelines - revision in progress	DNR	Lead	Not applicable	In progress
Clarify internal pollinator policies and streamline their implementation across agency actions.	Pending	Interagency team-member agencies	Lead	Pending	On hold
Update pollinator-related state policies, standard operating procedures, protocols, and guidelines in light of new scientific information	Pending	Interagency team-member agencies	Lead	Interagency team-member agencies	On hold

Memo

Date: November 7, 2025

To: Environmental Quality Board (EQB) members

From: EQB Environmental Review Staff

RE: Environmental review continuous improvement update

In June 2023, the Environmental Quality Board (EQB or Board) established a continuous improvement (CI) process supporting the Board's responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of Minnesota's environmental review (ER) program. The CI process includes procedural steps to be implemented on a regular basis. EQB staff are preparing to implement the CI process steps this fiscal year. Based on past experience and Board discussion, we are proposing minor changes to make the process clearer and more effective. This memo provides EQB staff recommendations for CI process updates along with an updated resolution for Board approval.

Background

The Board is directed to monitor Minnesota's environmental review program's effectiveness and take appropriate measures to modify and improve it. From late 2022 through June 2023, EQB staff worked with a third-party contractor to build and complete six CI procedural steps. In June 2023, the Board resolved to complete the CI process steps one through six once a biennium and to re-evaluate it every four years. The results of this initial CI process informed EQB workplanning for fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

During the development of the CI process, the EQB asked our partners, stakeholders, and the public to provide input on what makes the ER program "effective" and how to improve the program accordingly. This initial solicitation of ideas informed the criteria of effectiveness ([available on the CI webpage](#)) and resulted in a list of ideas for program improvements.

CI process updates

Based on learnings from the first CI run-through, EQB staff are proposing refinements to ensure a well-functioning CI process that:

- Recognizes the time, effort, and capacity needed to implement improvements
- Gathers, organizes and appraises improvements
- More clearly integrates with EQB's annual workplanning cycle

Refinement 1: Update internal procedures for CI Step 1

In 2023 public input was collected prior to any final decision on the program effectiveness criteria; therefore, public input was not directly connected to the effectiveness criteria. For the next CI run, staff created a template for soliciting program improvement ideas (see attachment 1), so that respondents are asked to:

- Select a "work area" their idea fits into
- Describe their idea in detail and clearly identify why it is needed
- Identify which program effectiveness criteria the idea will address (i.e. will it improve criteria for information, engagement, or process)

This format provides better guidance to our partners and will help EQB staff complete the remainder of the CI steps. This is a procedural update; it does not result in a change to the CI steps or the resolution.

Refinement 2: Update CI Steps 2 and 3 for clarity

In the 2023 CI process, EQB staff noted that some ideas were unclear, and many ideas overlapped with one another. Staff scored ideas verbatim but needed to document their interpretations and assumptions. The new idea solicitation template should result in more standardized formatting of ideas, but staff will still need to group or summarize the submitted ideas to best facilitate their evaluation. Step 2 in the updated resolution is edited to note this: “EQB staff review the scope of the improvements and adjust for step 3”.

EQB staff also propose a minor update to CI process step 3 which currently reads, “EQB staff evaluate and score improvements using a program effectiveness prioritization matrix.” The word ‘prioritization’ has caused confusion. The intent was to describe the matrix as a way of organizing improvements based on how they contributed to the objectives and effectiveness of the program (regardless of feasibility or resource constraints). However, we’ve heard the word “prioritization” could imply that the matrix scoring determines our annual workplan. This is not the case. Annual workplanning considers a wide variety of possible work from CI, staff, Board members, the legislature, etc. EQB considers this work through multiple lenses, including capacity, resources, and readiness. To avoid confusion, the updated resolution removes the word “prioritization.”

Refinement 3: Update the frequency of the CI process

EQB staff propose adjusting the frequency of the CI process, as has been discussed with the Board in prior meetings. Completing steps one through six of the CI process every biennium, as originally planned, does not leave enough time to execute improvements and see results. Some Board members expressed concerns about setting unreasonable expectations for the amount of work we can take on. They also expressed concerns about overburdening partners and stakeholders with too many public input periods (especially if many past ideas remain applicable). In response, staff recommend the full CI process take place every four years. The updated resolution reflects this. Annual workplanning can always draw from the most recent CI process ideas.

FY26 CI process plan

EQB staff propose starting the updated CI process in early 2026, and completing it every four years thereafter, to align the CI process timing with fiscal and legislative proposal development timelines. Staff are preparing the updated template for step one, (“EQB staff solicit ideas for program improvements”) which will provide partners and stakeholders the opportunity to explain their ideas and connect them to the program’s effectiveness criteria.

EQB staff will assess effectiveness and share a summary of the results of this solicitation with ERIS in June 2026. This will likely include common themes heard and recommended areas of future work. ERIS will also receive a proposed FY27 workplan for the ER program. As in past years, the workplan will identify projects that address CI improvement ideas. The full board will consider ERIS’s recommendation(s). The CI ideas provided in step one will continue to be used to inform annual workplanning and will also be used to inform other EQB projects.

Conclusion

EQB staff recommend the Board approve the attached resolution to update the CI process. The proposed refinements aim to clarify process steps and result in more detailed CI ideas in a more usable format. Timing and frequency adjustments will align the CI process with budget and policy timelines at the legislature and allow for completion of improvement ideas. Approving the resolution will also keep staff on schedule to solicit ideas (CI step one) in the first quarter of the 2026 calendar year and ensure the CI process can inform workplanning discussions with ERIS and the full Board in summer 2026.

Attachment 1: Idea solicitation framework

EQB staff examined all previously submitted ideas (from previous continuous improvement (CI) solicitations, EQB reports, legislative reports, mandatory category reports, etc.) to identify themes of improvements. As EQB prepares for the next CI run through in early 2026, we anticipate that ideas are likely to fall into one of the following survey topics.

The survey will ask users to title their idea, explain their idea, note what issue their idea will solve, select the likely mechanisms for implementing their idea (i.e. policy, education, etc.), and identify which criteria their idea will likely improve (i.e. improving information, engagement, and process).

Draft survey questions based on work area themes are listed below with instructions for the potential user.

Instructions: Your idea might fit into one of these themes - if so, please click that category (or select "other") and answer the survey questions.

1. *Projects Reviewed: I want to share an idea about what types of projects should or shouldn't receive environmental review (This includes suggestions for changes to mandatory categories).*
2. *EAW Form: I want to share an idea about the EAW form or its requirements.*
3. *Petitions: I want to share an idea for improving the petition process.*
4. *Data: I want to share an idea about how to collect and display data to evaluate how environmental review is being implemented.*
5. *Review Procedures: I want to share an idea about the overall implementation of environmental review including roles and responsibilities, appeals procedures, opportunities for quality assurance, predictability, timeliness, etc.*
6. *Engagement: I want to share an idea that will improve public engagement, notices, outreach, or equitable access to information.*
7. *Other: I want to share an idea that doesn't fit neatly into one of the above areas.*

RESOLUTION OF THE MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Updating the environmental review continuous improvement process

Introduction

Minnesota's environmental review (ER) program was created in 1973 to provide usable information to communities, decision makers, and project proposers on the potential for significant environmental effects for a wide variety of projects. The board is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the state environmental review program and its rules. The board is directed to take appropriate measures to modify and improve the effectiveness as needed (Minn. R. 4410.0400).

Background

In support of its role and responsibility for program effectiveness, in June 2023 the EQB established a continuous improvement process. The goal of the continuous improvement process is to identify potential program improvements in a strategic, transparent, and efficient manner. The board resolved to adopt a six-step CI process to be completed at least once a biennium. The board also resolved to re-evaluate the procedural steps at least every four years, in order make any necessary adjustments. The CI process procedural steps were fully completed once and informed two subsequent EQB environmental review program workplans.

Updates

The EQB has re-evaluated the procedural steps based on initial implementation, subsequent workplanning, and Board discussions. That evaluation identified the need to:

- Adjust the frequency of the CI process to be fully completed once every four years, and
- Clarify CI process steps 2 and 3 to more accurately reflect EQB staff's current practice of collating ideas and considering multiple factors for annual workplanning (not solely the outcome of Step 3).

Resolution

The board resolves to adopt and use the following continuous improvement procedural steps, at least once every four years (beginning in 2026) for the environmental review program:

1. EQB staff solicit ideas for program improvements.
2. EQB staff review the scope of the improvements and adjust for step 3.
3. EQB staff evaluate and score improvements using a program effectiveness matrix.
4. EQB staff plan for implementation of improvements.
5. ERIS completes review of implementation planning.
6. Board completes review and directs staff to implement selected projects.

These steps will be re-evaluated at least every four years, so the board may make any necessary adjustments.

The board approved and adopted this resolution on November 19, 2025.

Nancy Daubenberger, Chair
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Date: _____

From: Sarah Winter [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 9:29 AM
To: Env Review (EQB) <Env.Review@state.mn.us>
Subject: Hermantown Data Center

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Good morning,

I'm very concerned about the proposed Hermantown Data Center. My concerns are around the light pollution, wetlands use, proximity to clean streams, sound pollution and its effect on wildlife and human life and with the secrecy that has surrounded this project, making it difficult to understand the challenges that this poses. In other places around the country, I can see that data centers often use far more water than they originally proposed and that also poses a threat to our local community and environment.

From a Hermantown citizen's perspective, this requires valuable resources and returns nothing of substance to our community or to our state. Our groundwater, wetlands, and streams need to be protected from the billionaires that are attempting to buy them with unlimited amounts of money while not ever having to live with the consequences.

I have a simple house in Hermantown where I am raising four children. We love our spot in the woods and hope to live here for the rest of our lives. But if the environment is hurt by this data center's over use, our sweet spot in the woods becomes unlivable. We love to look at the stars at night and listen to the quiet. We have a well that is already 300' deep

and is just a trickle, groundwater is not plentiful in our area. Please protect us from these huge corporations that want to take all this away from us.

Warmly,

Sarah Winter

From: roxann voigt <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 12:43 PM
To: Env Review (EQB) <Env.Review@state.mn.us>
Subject: Data centers

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I live just outside pine Island, MN and the proposed data center here has not been pursued with transparency. Now residents are more aware we are asking lots of questions. We would like the process to pause so informed decisions can be made.

Honestly I do not think these projects should be anywhere near where people live.

What can we do to slow or stop this center from being built?

Thank you,

Roxann Voigt

Retired licensed psychologist and probation officer

From: Rebecca Gramdorf <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, October 16, 2025 10:24 AM
To: Env Review (EQB) <Env.Review@state.mn.us>
Subject: Hermantown Data Center AUAR

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To Whom it may concern:

There are several reasons why I am dissatisfied with the City of Hermantown's AUAR for the proposed data center at Midway/Morris Thomas Rd.

1. Nowhere in the AUAR does it label the development a data center. This ambiguity made it difficult for both individuals like myself and agencies to submit comment from an informed perspective. The project description should be clearly stated in enough detail for individuals to comment. In addition to saying it was a data center, they should have disclosed basic details such as cooling method.

2. The comment period was too short, or maybe even non-existent. News broke on Sept. 23 that the proposed development was a data center. According to a news article, we had until September 30 to offer public comment. I did so in that short window along with 100s of others. On October 6, the City of Hermantown accepted the AUAR. There is no indication that they considered any of the comments in their decision. The AUAR only

published a handful of public comments—the small number is a direct result of the inadequate project description.

3. I feel like the cumulative effects of the multiple developments in this area have not been weighed together. Has the environmental review taken into account the development of MN Power's new substation on adjacent land? Two huge industrial developments being built in such close proximity should be evaluated together. Also, the project involves the extension of sewer and water to the area. Has this been evaluated for environmental impacts or impacts to the residents.

4. The development is on the edge of Hermantown and some of those most affected live outside of its jurisdiction. Should an AUAR conducted by Hermantown be allowed, or should a statewide environmental review be required since the project borders Solway and Midway Townships so closely? It also uses Duluth public utilities. Should those effects not be put under review as well?

5. Now that it is revealed that the data center is air cooled (per the special use permit), it seems especially concerning that the AUAR did not thoroughly look into noise and air pollution. There should be an independent analysis of noise predictions of the data center (and the data center plus power substation) to make sure that they are staying within adequate limits.

Thanks,

Rebecca Gramdorf

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Allison Hafften <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 10:59 AM
To: Env Review (EQB) <Env.Review@state.mn.us>; Contact, Commissioner (COMM) <commissioner.commerce@state.mn.us>; Joseph Bauerkemper <jkbauerkemper@gmail.com>; Todd Holman <tholman.1998@gmail.com>; MN_Commissioner (DNR) <commissioner.dnr@state.mn.us>; Allison Hafften <allison.adam14@gmail.com>
Subject: Request EQB Oversight of Proposed Data Center Hermantown MN

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Good morning EQB Members and Commissioners:

Grace Arnold, Commissioner, DoC

Joseph Bauerkemper, District 8

Todd Holman, Board of Water and Soil Resources Chair

Sarah Strommen, Department of Natural Resources

I am writing to you to request urgent action from the EQB to intervene in the business proposal of a large scale data center in a rural area of Hermantown, MN. The proposed data center has been obscured from public awareness through non-disclosure agreements (NDA) signed by the Hermantown city council members and St. Louis County Board members. It was only made public through Hermantown's Alternative Urban Areawide Review released in September 2025 which had less than 30 days of public review and comment. The city council is moving fast to rezone 325 acres from suburban to business

light manufacturing with a vote on October 20, 2025. The AUAR only identified the project as a communication center with limited details and information as prevented by the NDAs. The proposed project is 4 buildings totaling 1.8 million square feet in a location that is mostly rural, natural land and in close proximity to a protected DNR trout stream called Rocky Run. I feel a full Environmental Impact Statement is appropriate for this scale of a project that will have significant, irreversible impact on the surrounding area and require huge volumes of water and electricity to operate. Recently, when Minnesota Power proposed the HVDC converter substation project, full regulatory proceedings through the MPUC including environmental review, public hearings and open houses were required. Jenna Ness was the Environmental Review Manager on that project. This proposed data center project will be many times more impactful and somehow it is only being regulated by the local city council. Local citizens will be filing a petition for environmental review, but given the urgency of the city council vote and the compromised decision making of the city council bound by NDAs, I ask you to intervene immediately.

On a grander scale, Minnesota needs a state-wide regulatory process for communication and data centers. They are being proposed all across the state and targeting rural communities using NDAs and AUARs to skirt public oversight and appropriate review. I urge you to bring this matter to the attention of state legislators and update EQB regulations to address mandatory EIS reviews for data centers and communication centers.

Regards,

Allison Hafften

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Aubree Derksen <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, October 21, 2025 8:40 AM

To: MN_EQB_Info <info.EQB@state.mn.us>

Subject: Data center public comment

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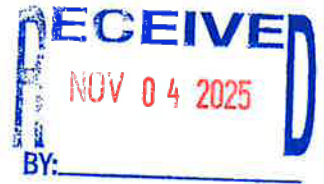
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I'm asking that a statewide moratorium be placed on all data center development, particularly hyperscale ones. As a state we need clear rules, policies and regulations in place BEFORE we proceed, not after. We already have the starts of good ones in place and we already know where we need to improve (ie data centers being a separate mandatory category, water permitting not allowing data centers to be priority municipal water users). Those rules changes will take time but we need that time in place. The alternative is having our financial resources tied up in dozens of legal battles and towns like mine being sacrificial lambs in a context where those having power to prevent our deaths simply chose not to. As a resident of Pine Island I stand in solidarity with Hermantown, Cannon Falls, Farmington, Faribault, Lakeville, North Mankato, Harmony as we loudly shout "stop sacrificing us!" We need a moratorium and new rules now!

Aubree

"Not being able to speak is not the same as not having anything to say." -Rosemary Crossley



October 8, 2025

This is a copy of my recent letter to Cannon Falls city officials. Surely there are things that can be done at the state level to protect our quality of life. Please do what you can.'

Dear Cannon Falls City Officials:

This letter is updated from one I sent in August. I am writing out of concern about proposed data centers in our area. Because I am not a city resident, I want you to know that your actions or inaction potentially affect me, my family, and my neighbors.

It appears to me that the Cannon Falls city officials have been "wined and dined" and aggressively lobbied by TRACT. I am worried that potential issues are being ignored. It seems that TRACT and others are pursuing multiple projects in many Minnesota areas and hoping that some "stick to the wall." See: Hermantown, Pine Island, others.

It is vital that the data centers go through the environmental review process. Did the recent EQB meeting facilitate that requirement? My concerns are for clean air, clean water, and a fair economic impact on the city, school district, and any other affected concerns.

First: water. Data centers use massive amounts, and the process must require sustainable use (including closed systems, recycling, etc.). There is the potential for draw downs of our aquifer, which will undoubtedly affect city water systems and private wells in the area such as mine in Cannon Falls Township. I read the statement that the city infrastructure can handle such a data center, but that doesn't take into account other issues about water usage and quality.

Second: clean air. Since data centers are electricity hogs, they must rely heavily on clean and renewable sources. Require that and keep fossil fuel generation to an absolute minimum. Cannon Falls has the Invenergy plant, and the potential for its increased use puts our air quality at risk. This is especially true for down-wind areas such as the neighborhoods, school playgrounds, and those of us who live east of town. I have read that there are diesel engines involved in some plants, too, and that's something that should not be allowed.

Third: other potential environmental issues such as noise. This and other possible issues should be addressed in the EIS, should it be approved.

Fourth: economic impacts. The data center companies and developers tout the positive economic impacts. They claim good jobs; however they require very few employees once built. As for taxes, they MUST PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE and not get any breaks from the city, county, or state. Period. Since the Cannon Falls site is within the Randolph School District, that leaves the Cannon Falls School District high and dry. It's unclear to me how that could be rectified.

PLEASE publicize ALL the effects of the project, both negative and positive. We need to be clear-eyed about the effects of the potential data center.

Thank you for reading this and considering the opinions of someone outside of your jurisdiction who undoubtedly will be affected by your decisions regarding data centers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roslyn Hjermstad". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roslyn Hjermstad