



Environmental review for gas resource development

Outline



- **Overview:** EQB and Environmental Review
- **Background:** Gas production in Minnesota (Helium/hydrogen focus)
- **Recommendations:** Environmental Review for gas resource development

Gas Resources Technical Advisory Committee

The Minnesota legislature enacted legislation on May 22, 2024, directing the DNR to form and lead the Gas Resources Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC). The multi-agency committee was charged with developing recommendations on a temporary regulatory framework for regulating gas projects during rulemaking.

- The legislation was enacted due to discovery of a helium gas deposit in the northeastern part of the state
- GTAC is required to provide recommendations on a variety of topics, one of which is environmental review
- EQB oversees the Minnesota Environmental Review Program

EQB's roles and responsibilities

- EQB oversees the state of Minnesota's environmental review program and has the authority to draft rules for the program. These rules describe:
 - when review is required
 - procedures to conduct environmental review
 - criteria that must be used for making decisions on environmental review documents
- EQB is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the program and responding appropriately to modify and improve the effectiveness.
- Environmental review is conducted by a responsible governmental unit such as a county, city or state agency. The requirements for environmental review are based on the nature, size, and location of the proposed project.

Rules and Statutes



Minnesota Statute 116C



Created the Environmental Quality Board (EQB)



Minnesota Statute 116D



Minnesota Environmental Policy Act gives the Board authority to adopt rules



**Minnesota Rules
Chapter 4410**



Implements the Environmental Review (ER) Program established by statute

Environmental Review Roles



EQB

- Monitor program effectiveness
- Help understand the rules
- Create guidance



Project Proposer

- Provide project details



Responsible Governmental Unit

- Implement procedures
- Prepare environmental documents
- Decision maker

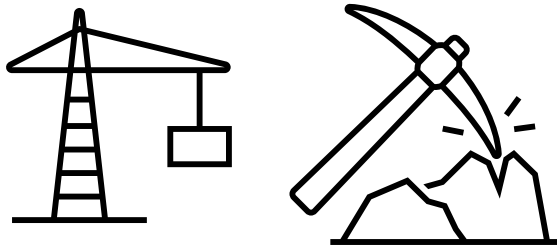


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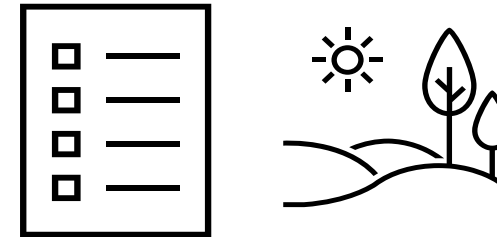
- Review environmental documents
- Provide comments

How environmental review works

Proposed projects that could impact Minnesota's environment go through a review process before getting any required permits or approvals. Some projects are required (mandatory categories), some are done voluntarily, while others can be petitioned for review by the community.



Environmental review documents are prepared by the responsible governmental unit, and those documents are meant to describe the project, detail its potential environmental effects, and identify ways to reduce negative impacts to the environment.



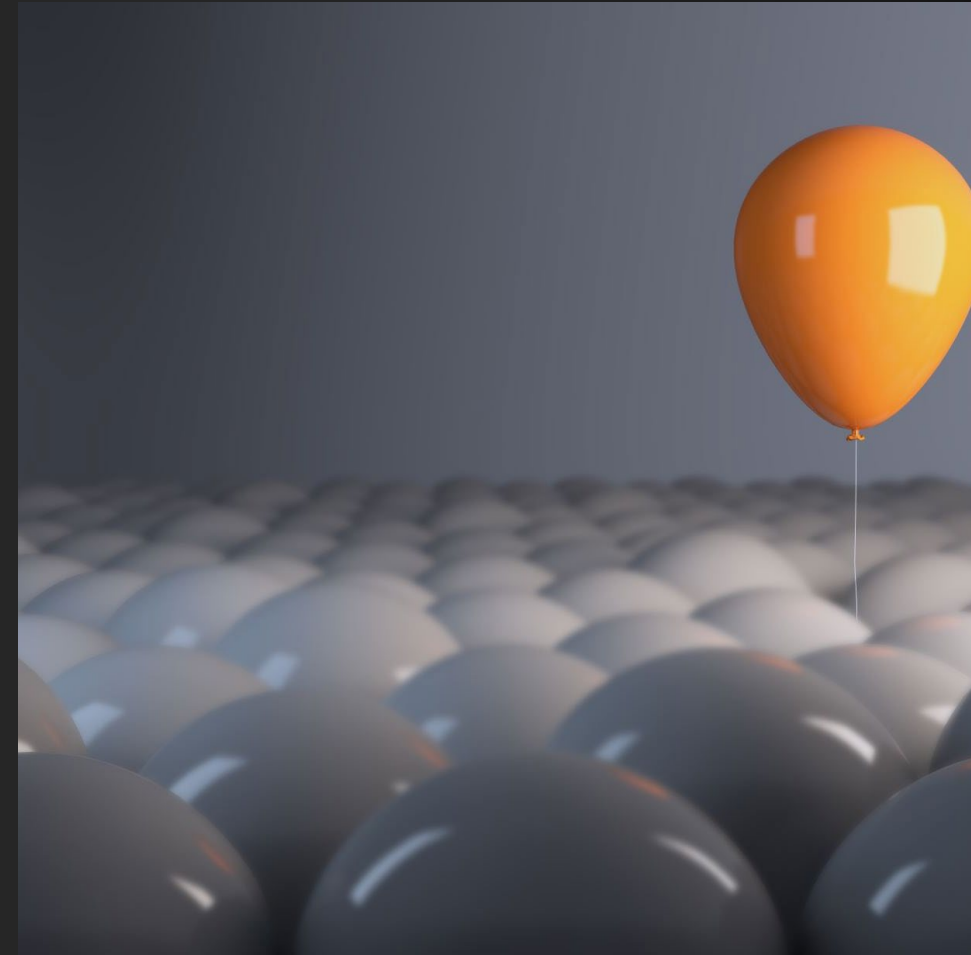
Why we do Environmental Review

- Regulatory program that implements federal and/or state policy
- Encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between people and their environment
- Applies to certain future projects
- Public disclosure of all potential environmental effects in one document
- Informs government approvals



Gas production in Minnesota

- Helium discovery in Minnesota driving development of gas regulations
- Environmental review needed to consider environmental impacts
- Since this is a new industry in Minnesota, EQB determined recommendations for the environmental review process should be mandatory for any gas resource development project



Recommendations

For the temporary framework until permanent rules are created, the following are EQB recommendations:

1. Mandatory EAW required for any gas resources development project
2. The Department of Natural Resources will serve as the Responsible Governmental Unit



Reasoning for recommendations

- Gas resource development projects have the potential for significant environmental effects, such as:
 - Quality of surface and groundwater
 - Air quality (GHG, air pollutants, odor)
 - Traffic/infrastructure
 - Sensitive resources (rare species, native plant communities, cultural resources)
 - Noise
 - Cumulative impacts
- Environmental review process will benefit decision makers and the public in understanding potential impacts from a new project type in Minnesota
- The DNR is anticipated to have the greatest responsibility for supervising or approving the project as a whole

Contact Us

For questions and more information contact
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