

DNR Environmental Justice Advisory Committee Charter

Committee Purpose:

- a) Create a forum wherein DNR receives feedback from and is directly responsive to external frontline community organizations and populations.
- b) Provide feedback and guidance on DNR programs, assessments, opportunities, and implementation of the HEAL Act on an agency-wide level.
- c) Elevate leadership and participation of communities most impacted and historically excluded in setting the vision, measures, assessing progress, and holding the state (and DNR) accountable.
- d) Assist DNR directly resource community-based solutions in line with Justice40 and other guidance on environmental justice.
- e) Advise the DNR Office of Equity and Environmental Justice, DNR’s Policy Director, and the Commissioner of Public Lands on all issues related to environmental justice enforcement, including policy choices, budget prioritization, training needs, research and data collection, and coordination with other state agencies, Tribal, and local governmental partners.
- f) The committee shall provide an annual report to the Board of Natural Resources.

Committee Name:

This charter refers to the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee as “the Committee.”

Composition:

The Environmental Justice Advisory Committee is hereby established. The Committee shall consist of a minimum of twelve members, ten of whom shall be chosen as follows:

- a) Ten individuals from frontline and/or overburdened communities. Membership should reflect geographic, socio-economic, and ethnic/racial diversity.
 - a. Members need not represent organizations or associations. Ideally, members have some connection to community-based organizations and/or have an interest or background in environmental justice issues.
 - b. Members shall be residents of Washington State.

There shall be two ex-officio positions:

- a) One representative from DNR’s Office of Equity and Environmental Justice, or their designee – this individual shall also serve as the non-voting Chair of the Committee.
- b) DNR’s Director for Tribal Relations, or their designee. This individual shall serve as co-chair of the Committee and will have voting power.

Strategic Partners:

- a) The Commissioner of Public Lands retains the authority to appoint additional members to the Committee if they deem it appropriate to advance the objectives, purpose, and goals of the Committee.
- b) Additional subject matter expertise may be utilized when it will further the Committee’s knowledge or understanding of a specific topic.

The Committee shall have the authority to invite representatives of overburdened or underrepresented communities to participate in and lead subcommittee meetings. These additional representatives shall not be appointed by the Commissioner.

Membership Responsibilities:

- a) Committee Chair (Non-Voting):
 - a. Provides leadership for the Committee. Includes assigning work, monitoring assignments, and providing guidance on annual work planning.
 - b. Facilitate consultation between the Committee and relevant external stakeholders.
 - c. Review the functioning and development of the Committee.
 - d. Determine, in consultation with the Committee Vice-Chair, the content of meeting agendas, the order in which items are taken and the amount of time to be devoted to each.
 - e. Make final decisions on questions of board procedures.
 - f. Reports to the Commissioner of Public Lands, as needed, to convey information concerning Committee activities or to request action on behalf of the Committee.
- b) Committee Vice-Chair:
 - a. Supports the Chair in providing leadership for the Committee.
 - b. Assists the Chair in developing meeting agendas and the committee's calendar of work.
 - c. Executes the duties of Chair in their absence.
- c) Committee Staff Support:
 - a. Coordinates directly with Committee Chair, develops and plans meeting agendas and identifies key meeting objectives.
 - b. Conducts outreach to Committee members to coordinate the development of recommendations and Committee work plans.
 - c. Facilitates Committee meetings, and the establishment and coordination of work groups and subcommittees as they are deemed necessary.
 - d. Takes notes during Committee meetings on decisions and pending action items.
- d) Committee Membership:
 - a. Support Committee communications and interactions to advise the Office of Equity and Environmental Justice and the Commissioner of Public lands on matters related to environmental justice as it pertains to DNR programs, practices, and policies.
 - b. Provide creative and proactive solutions to ensure long-term success of the Committee's mission; work to thoroughly understand the context and specifics of an issue and consider a range of alternatives when developing recommendations.
 - c. Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of environmental justice measures, outcomes, and goals set by DNR.
 - d. Report Committee activities and disseminate information to constituents and home communities.
 - e. Other duties related to environmental justice issues in the state as requested by the Commissioner or the Office of Equity and Environmental Justice.

Appointing Authority:

The Commissioner of Public Lands shall appoint the members of the Committee. Members shall serve two-year terms and shall be eligible for reappointment. Vacancies on the Committee shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

Strategic partners may be invited to participate and contribute – these partners shall not be appointed directly by the Commissioner.

Term Limits:

For all Committee appointments, members are eligible for reappointment following each two-year term. Members are limited to serving no more than three (3) consecutive terms. An exception to the three-term rule may be granted at the discretion of the Commissioner.

Meeting Cadence:

The Committee shall meet on, at minimum, a quarterly basis.

Operating Guidelines:

- a) The Committee will meet at the call of the Committee chair.
- b) Efforts shall be made to provide phone or video conferencing for the meeting.
- c) The Committee will not be operational, set policy, or function as a political arm of the agency. Its purpose is to provide advice to the agency, and it shall not take on additional work or projects, which are outside of that scope.
- d) The Committee will endeavor to make recommendations through consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, a simple majority will rule with any dissent documented in meeting notes. The Department will provide Committee members a minimum of 10 days advance notice of meeting place, date, time, and agenda.
- e) Meeting preparation may require outside reading or research prior to the meeting.
- f) The Chair will solicit recommendations for new business to be included for consideration on the agenda of the next meeting.

Attendance, removal, and resignation:

- a) Committee members are expected to attend regular meetings.
- b) If attendance of a Committee member is not possible, prior notification to the Committee Chair no less than 24 hours before the meeting is appreciated.
- c) Members must attend at least 75% of meetings to maintain appointment.
- d) Multiple absences without notice, or other conduct that seriously interferes with a member's ability to perform their duties may result in removal of the member by the Committee Chair.
- e) Members may resign from the Committee by providing co-chairs with a resignation in writing.

Compensation:

In 2021, the Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5793 which works to reduce barriers for low-income individuals and community members with lived experience to participate in the state's critical task forces and workgroups. Under what is now RCW 43.03.220, any board, commission, council, committee, or similar group established by an agency in an advisory, coordinating, or planning capacity functions as a Class One Group, which allows stipend compensation to be provided to members that meet specific criteria. Subject to available funding, the DNR may provide a stipend to select individuals to support their participation in the group to ensure that principles of equity are achieved.

The Environmental Justice Advisory Committee shall follow any current or new guidelines issued by the Department of Natural Resources. Requests for compensation evaluation shall be directed to the DNR's Office of Equity and Environmental Justice and shall be evaluated and granted independent of the EJ Advisory Committee.