Environmental Review Questionnaire

At the direction of the Minnesota Legislature, the Office of the Legislative Auditor is evaluating Minnesota's processes for environmental review and permitting. We are especially interested in learning more about your recent experiences with projects undergoing environmental review, for which environmental assessment worksheets (EAWs), scoping EAWs, or draft or final environmental impact statements (EISs) were prepared. In this questionnaire, we refer to these documents as "environmental review documents."

If you have commented on multiple environmental review projects in the last two years, base your answers on your experience with the XXXXXXXXX project. Space for your comments is available at the end.

Your name will <u>not be made public</u>. We will not report individual responses that include identifying information.

Your Questionnaire ID Number: XXX

Your ID is needed for our tracking but will not be used to identify you or your specific responses.

1. Please mark the response that best describes your involvement as a person commenting on the environmental review project. *(Please mark one response.)*

		Original		OLA Reclassification	
		N	%	N	%
❒ a.	Citizen	96	50	110	57
❒ b.	Representative of a nonprofit organization or public interest group	18	9	28	15
❒ c.	Government agency employee	54	28	54	28
❒ d.	Consultant	5	3		
❒ e.	Other *(Please specify.)*	18	9		
❒ f.	None	1	1		

2. For the most recent environmental review project on which you offered comments, what was the primary way you learned about the project? *(Please mark one response.)*

		Citizen		Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives		Public Agency Employee	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
❒ a.	Read notice in the *EQB Monitor*	0	0	2	7	1	2
❒ b.	Received information on projects as part of my job	7	6	5	18	42	78
❒ c.	Notified by a state or local government agency or read on a government agency's web page	8	7	6	21	8	15
❒ d.	Informed by a nonprofit organization or other public interest group	24	22	6	21	0	0
❒ e.	Notified by the project's proposer	18	17	5	18	1	2
❒ f.	Read notice in a local newspaper	24	22	2	7	0	0
❒ g.	Other *(Please specify.)*	28	26	2	7	2	4

3. How easy were the following aspects of the environmental review process in which you participated? *(Mark one in each row.)*

	Somewhat or Very Easy		Neither Easy nor Difficult		Somewhat or Very Difficult		Don't Know or Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Learning that the project was undergoing environmental review								
Citizens (N=108)	75	69	16	15	16	15	1	1
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	18	64	9	32	1	4	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	47	87	5	9	2	4	0	0
b. Obtaining relevant documents about the project								
Citizens (N=108)	56	52	19	18	30	28	3	3
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	13	48	8	30	6	22	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=52)	42	81	4	8	6	12	0	0
c. Understanding steps to take to comment on environmental review documents								
Citizens (N=108)	59	55	22	20	26	24	1	1
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	13	48	13	48	1	4	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=53)	46	87	5	9	2	4	0	0
d. Learning about the final decision on the environmental review documents								
Citizens (N=108)	51	47	18	17	30	28	9	8
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	14	52	6	22	6	22	1	4
Public Agency Employee (N=52)	27	52	10	19	10	19	5	10

4. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following about your experiences with your most recent environmental review project? *(Mark one in each row.)*

	Somewhat or Strongly Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat or Strongly Disagree		Don't Know or Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. The environmental review documents I read were complete and comprehensive.								
Citizens (N=108)	51	47	9	8	41	38	7	6
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	16	57	4	14	8	29	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	36	67	8	15	8	15	2	4
b. Information in the environmental review documents was clear and understandable.								
Citizens (N=106)	56	53	11	10	35	33	4	4
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	17	61	5	18	6	21	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	34	63	9	17	9	17	2	4

c. The environmental review documents provided useful information on potentially significant environmental effects.								
Citizens (N=105)	55	52	11	10	34	32	5	5
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	16	59	7	26	4	15	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	32	59	7	13	13	24	2	4
d. The environmental review documents were about the right length and appropriately detailed.								
Citizens (N=106)	43	41	18	17	40	38	5	5
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	11	39	6	21	11	39	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	27	50	10	19	15	28	2	4
e. The amount of time available to become informed about the project was about right.								
Citizens (N=107)	50	47	24	22	31	29	2	2
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	14	50	6	21	8	29	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	39	72	9	17	6	11	0	0
f. The amount of time available to provide comments was about right.								
Citizens (N=105)	58	55	20	19	26	25	1	1
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	14	50	6	21	8	29	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	40	74	4	7	9	17	1	2
g. The amount of time for the environmental review process overall was about right.								
Citizens (N=107)	46	43	25	23	30	28	6	6
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	10	36	5	18	13	46	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	35	65	13	24	5	9	1	2
h. Sufficient guidance was available to help understand the environmental review process.								
Citizens (N=105)	45	43	28	27	27	26	5	5
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	13	48	8	30	5	19	1	4
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	33	61	11	20	6	11	4	7
i. My comments on the environmental review documents were understood by the responsible governmental unit that oversaw the development of the documents.								
Citizens (N=105)	45	43	16	15	32	30	12	11
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	12	43	9	32	4	14	3	11
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	35	65	8	15	6	11	5	9
j. The responsible governmental unit responded to my comments in a reasonable manner.								
Citizens (N=105)	44	42	19	18	33	31	9	9
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	11	39	8	29	7	25	2	7
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	29	54	12	22	8	15	5	9

k. In my view, my involvement was useful.

Citizens (N=106)	55	52	15	14	32	30	4	4
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	19	68	5	18	2	7	2	7
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	34	63	14	26	6	11	0	0

l. The environmental review was important to having my concerns addressed.

Citizens (N=106)	68	64	7	7	27	25	4	4
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	18	64	4	14	6	21	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	34	63	13	24	6	11	1	2

m. Overall, the environmental review process worked well.

Citizens (N=105)	47	45	14	13	39	37	5	5
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=28)	14	50	5	18	9	32	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	39	72	9	17	5	9	1	2

5. How satisfied were you overall with the work of the responsible governmental unit overseeing the environmental review? *(Please mark one.)*

	Somewhat or Very Satisfied		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied		Somewhat or Very Dissatisfied		Don't Know or Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Citizens (N=107)	42	39	12	11	49	46	4	4
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	12	44	6	22	9	33	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	31	57	13	24	9	17	1	2

6. If the project on which you commented involved more than one government agency, what is your impression of how well the different government agencies worked together or coordinated their activities? *(Please mark one.)*

	Citizen (N=106)		Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)		Public Agency Employee (N=54)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
❒ a. Not applicable—the project had only one government agency involved	9	8	5	19	10	19
❒ b. Positive impression	12	11	5	19	13	24
❒ c. Neutral impression	9	8	1	4	5	9
❒ d. Mixed impression	22	21	7	26	5	9
❒ e. Negative impression	20	19	3	11	2	4
❒ f. Don't know how well the agencies worked together	21	20	4	15	13	24
❒ g. Not aware of how many government agencies were involved	13	12	2	7	6	11

For the final two questions, if you have commented on multiple environmental reviews in the past two years, please base your answers on your general experiences over that time, not just the most recent project.

7. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very good and 5 being very poor, how would you rate the environmental review process in achieving the following purposes? *(Mark one per row.)*

	Somewhat or Very Good		Acceptable		Somewhat or Very Poor		Don't Know or Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Providing usable information to the public on the primary environmental effects of a project								
Citizens (N=104)	40	38	15	14	46	44	3	3
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	15	56	5	19	7	26	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	28	52	16	30	7	13	3	6
b. Providing usable information to project proposers on the primary environmental effects of a project								
Citizens (N=101)	36	36	18	18	27	27	20	20
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	13	48	4	15	7	26	3	11
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	32	59	10	19	6	11	6	11
c. Providing the public with systematic access to decision makers involved with environmental reviews								
Citizens (N=103)	28	27	22	21	47	46	6	6
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	10	37	10	37	4	15	3	11
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	24	44	16	30	8	15	6	11
d. Encouraging accountability in public decisionmaking on permits and approvals for projects with potential environmental impacts								
Citizens (N=102)	40	39	11	11	44	43	7	7
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	10	37	8	30	7	26	2	7
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	30	56	16	30	5	9	3	6
e. Delegating responsibility for environmental review to the government unit most closely involved in a project								
Citizens (N=102)	31	30	20	20	27	26	24	24
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	14	52	8	30	3	11	2	7
Public Agency Employee (N=53)	34	64	11	21	5	9	3	6
f. Reducing delay in collecting and analyzing information on environmental impacts								
Citizens (N=102)	28	27	23	23	32	31	19	19
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	9	33	7	26	8	30	3	11
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	19	35	18	33	8	15	9	17

g. Eliminating duplication of effort in collecting and analyzing information on environmental impacts								
Citizens (N=100)	24	24	13	13	26	26	37	37
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	8	30	10	37	5	19	4	15
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	24	44	15	28	3	6	12	22
h. Reducing uncertainty in obtaining project approvals								
Citizens (N=102)	22	22	16	16	38	37	26	25
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	8	30	7	26	5	19	7	26
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	18	33	18	33	6	11	12	22
i. Reducing uncertainty about a project's potential environmental effects								
Citizens (N=102)	26	25	14	14	54	53	8	8
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	11	41	4	15	12	44	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	23	43	21	39	7	13	3	6
j. Understanding the impact that a proposed project will have on the environment								
Citizens (N=101)	31	31	15	15	49	49	6	6
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	11	41	6	22	10	37	0	0
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	27	50	19	35	6	11	2	4
k. Avoiding or minimizing adverse environmental effects of a proposed project								
Citizens (N=102)	27	26	14	14	49	48	12	12
Nonprofit or Public Interest Group Representatives (N=27)	10	37	6	22	10	37	1	4
Public Agency Employee (N=54)	24	44	18	33	9	17	3	6

8. Do you have either comments about the process for environmental reviews or suggestions for what you would like to see changed?

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

Please return it in the postage-paid envelope by September 9, 2010.