

CHARTER of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association WATER QUALITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Purpose

The purpose of the Water Quality Executive Committee (WQEC) is to facilitate collaborative decision-making, cooperative action, and information sharing among the five States of the Upper Mississippi River Basin (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin) with regard to water quality issues on the Upper Mississippi River, and to provide a policy link between collective actions and individual actions by the States.

Authority

The WQEC was established by resolution of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) on August 24, 2006, consistent with Section V of the UMRBA Bylaws, which empowers UMRBA to establish committees.

Each agency with representation on the WQEC participates under the auspices of its own authorities governing interagency coordination and water pollution control. Participation does not restrict any individual agency or State's authority to issue permits, manage programs, set water quality standards, operate projects, or fulfill other individual agency mandates. The views expressed and actions taken by individual agency representatives and by the WQEC are not binding on any agency, unless the member agencies explicitly enter into a binding agreement.

Membership

Membership of the WQEC shall be composed of the water quality administrator(s), or equivalent, of each of the following agencies:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Members shall be appointed by the directors of the agencies named above. In the event that a member is unable to participate in a meeting of the WQEC, he or she may designate another staff person to act on their behalf, on a temporary basis.

Regions 5 and 7 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency shall be invited to serve as nonvoting members of the WQEC. Each of the two Regional Administrators shall be requested to appoint a representative from their agency to participate in and assist the WQEC.

Scope of Mission

The primary focus of the WQEC shall be on implementing the States' responsibilities, under the federal Clean Water Act, on the interstate portion of the main stem of the Mississippi River, north of its confluence with the Ohio River. Other issues related to water quality or water pollution control may also be addressed by the Committee, as mutually agreed upon by the Committee members or as requested by UMRBA.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Provide a forum for State water quality administrators to discuss policy, programmatic, and budgetary issues related to implementation of the Clean Water Act on the Upper Mississippi River.
- Discuss and promote the member agencies' perspectives on river-related water quality policy, programmatic, and budgetary issues with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- Seek to establish a consensus among the basin States' water quality administrators on major issues related to implementation of the Clean Water Act on the Upper Mississippi River.
- Promote effective joint implementation of Clean Water Act responsibilities by the States on the Upper Mississippi River.
- Appoint a representative(s) from their agency to the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force, which is an interstate working group of water quality agency staff.
- Provide policy direction for the work of the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force and act upon reports forwarded by the Task Force.
- Ensure that the products and efforts of the Task Force are recognized and incorporated, as appropriate, into the water quality programs of the States' environmental protection agencies.
- Foster coordination between the States' water quality agencies and other state and federal agencies, particularly those represented on the UMRBA.

Operation

The position of WQEC Chair shall rotate on a biennial basis among its members. The duties of the Chair shall include presiding at meetings of the Committee; consulting with UMRBA staff in preparation of agendas, materials, and work plans for the Committee; and reporting to UMRBA on the activities of the Committee.

The WQEC will meet as-needed, but typically on a semi-annual basis. At least one meeting per year shall be held in conjunction with a quarterly meeting of the UMRBA and one meeting per year shall be held in conjunction with the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force.

Whenever possible, the WQEC will attempt to achieve unanimous consent among its members, particularly on matters of policy.

Reports, policy papers or position statements resulting from the deliberations of the Committee shall be forwarded to the UMRBA Board for its consideration and action.

The UMRBA shall provide staff support to the WQEC, including making meeting arrangements, preparing meeting agendas and summaries, preparing background materials, developing draft reports and policy papers, and other activities as assigned by the Committee, consistent with staff capacity as reflected in UMRBA's budget.

The WQEC shall prepare an annual work plan and estimate of funding needs for consideration by UMRBA in development of the annual UMRBA budget. Sources of funding to support the WQEC may include special assessments on the Committee's participating state agencies; UMRBA dues that support UMRBA's general operations; and grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts from outside sources.

The cost of participating in the WQEC, including travel costs associated with meetings, shall be the responsibility of the state agencies represented on the Committee, unless such costs are covered by the terms of a grant or cooperative agreement that UMRBA secures to support the work of the Committee.

Approved by the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association on November 15, 2006.