

Environmental Health Continuous Improvement Board (EH CIB) Notes

Date: December 15, 2025

Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Attendance

Amanda Buell

Tom Hogan

David Boberg

Kim Carlton

Sagar Chowdhury

Sarah Grosshuesch

Tom Higgins

Linda Kopecky

Jason Newby

Blake Nordin

Kent Severson

Wendy Spanier

Rick Toms

Diana Ditsch

Welcome

Meeting Purpose – Develop a shared understanding of workgroup needs, priorities, and responsibilities related to Environmental Health.

Review and approve meeting notes from September.

Board approved September 15, 2025, Meeting Notes.

Workgroup Discussion

The EH CIB members held a general discussion about the workgroups with the following questions:

- Do you feel progress is being made?
- Is the workgroup "stuck" on any issues?
- Are there plans in the works for legislative policy changes?
- If a general timeline doesn't exist already - would that be helpful?
- How do we distribute or share the responsibilities in the specific work?

Mobile Food Unit workgroup – It is easier to change things at the local level than the state level. The group is having challenges working on the universal license. Industry concerns can play into the progress. Some language from Industry that they are looking at and discussing it with various agencies. It feels like some modest changes in practice are gaining steam. Local public health is being innovative. How we distribute the load related to policy development (such as new legislative language). Lots of good ideas but then some challenges. Sharing the responsibility of policy development means working together financially so we would need to work out who is handling what and where does it go. As the general timeline doesn't exist, we are making incremental improvements. It might be helpful to put together a timeline with milestones. Complete things by certain dates to help move things along. Will need to look at the charter of the group to see if timeline is addressed. Some locals are doing a one stop license renewal. We have learned a lot from other disciplines. All three license types of electric, fire, and food. Would like to learn about a broader regional and statewide change. MDH looks at legislative developments and to see how that would play out in the state. Public hearings are a great opportunity to hear from industry and locals probably carry more weight.

FPLS program evaluation workgroup – Going through the latest standards. Not aware that we are stuck on any issues. Will need to review timeline due to capacity issues. Last two standards may be the heaviest lift for the group.

Delegation Agreement Workgroup – Workgroup has made a lot of progress. There are topics that need more discussion. Finished going through the main delegation agreement and the next step is to look at the provisional agreements. Don't have a timeline yet. Limited to a smaller group setting. More information flowing to members. Looking at opening the group to the delegated agencies to add those who would like to join. Collaboration with public health system is restricted by training needs. There is a lot more turnover in positions so would like to see more collaboration around training.

Key Topics

- **Vacation Rental Discussion** – both MDH, DOR, and other agencies have previous legislative initiatives which were not successful. Still need understanding that there is a public health risk for some of those sites. MDH has leaned into lodging requirements around vacation rentals. Local government units have a lot more success regulating vacation rentals. The zoning component at the local level plays an important role compared to the state. Need to address people trafficking issues. Concern about capacity issue to absorb that many vacation home rental inspections. For example, there are 1,100 vacation home rentals in Rochester. Are delegated agencies required to inspect vacation rentals? What is the role of the EH CIB in working this out? A lot of intertwined pieces with lack of agreement of who does what and then how that interacts with the local ordinances. What role can the EH CIB play in tackling this issue? First maybe find out how it is being handled right now at the local level and at the state level. What are those public health elements that are of highest priorities? Like trafficking, safe drinking water.
- **Membership of EH CIB**
- **Distribution of EH CIB Notes** – Need to send out the minutes in a timelier manner. Make sure to add to the invite and do a separate email with the attachments.
- **Federal Funds Impact on EHD** – \$30 million in a 5-year grant comes into MDH to support environmental health work. Two thirds of the EHD funding is drinking water related.

Agenda Topics for Next Time

- Legislative Session Update.
- Will review the notes and there may be things to address further from workgroup discussion.

Word on the Street Forum

- MDA are holding a delegated agencies' meeting to look at program evaluation results and a legislative proposals. The meeting is to do some cleanup on our delegated statute language and get feedback.
- Chris Elvrum is the new MDH EHD Drinking Water Protection Section Manager. Stephanie Drier is the new Environmental Surveillance and Assessment Section Manager. ESA contains areas like lead surveillance, lead risk assessments, climate, contaminated sites, biomonitoring, evaluation of drinking water contaminants, and MN Tracking.

Next Meeting: March 16, 2026

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www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/local/ehcib/index.html

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