

Environmental Quality Council

Agency to which group reports

Does not apply, decisions are appealed to Wyoming State District Court

Number of meetings

Averages eight meetings a year, additional meetings scheduled as needed. Number does not include number of hearings.

Mission and philosophy

The Environmental Quality Council was established as a separate operating agency to hear and decide all cases or issues arising under the laws, rules, regulations, standards or orders issued by the Department of Environmental Quality.

Results of outcomes

During this reporting period, the council has issued decisions on 35 cases. These cases were either scheduled for a hearing and were withdrawn, resolved, or had their permits modified. The council also held four contested case hearings with prehearings, one of which was a request for interim mine stabilization (IMS); one motion hearing; four rulemaking hearings; five meetings; and a petition to designate as rare or uncommon a portion of the state land in Natrona County known as the Devil's Gate and Rattlesnake Pass.

The council has also canceled two meetings and five hearings.

The council holds hearings in contested cases where evidence is presented for evaluation by the council. The council holds hearings on new or revised regulations for the Department of Environmental Quality. These hearings allow the public to comment on proposed regulations for the state. Discussion of the evidence in cases, review of public comment, and issuance of decisions takes place at public meetings. A case of particular interest this past year was a request to designate an area as rare or uncommon. The petitioner claimed the presence of a landmark relating to the westward migration over the Mormon, Oregon, and California trails should be found to be a rare or uncommon feature of the state. At the conclusion of the designation process, Rattlesnake Pass was recognized for historical significance. Contested cases included a hearing relating to the reclamation of a rail loop at a coal mine in the Hanna Basin. The council upheld DEQ's decision and the case was appealed to the district court. The court affirmed the council's decision. A hearing was held in a case that disputed DEQ's determination of the existence of an alluvial valley floor in a mine permit area. The council decided in favor of the mine. The council

General information

Terri A. Lorenzon, esq., director

Agency contact

Carmen C. Curtis

122 W. 25th Street

Herschler Bldg., Room 1714, One West

Cheyenne, WY 82002

fax: 307/777-6134

ccurti@state.wy.us; tloren@state.wy.us;

jgirar@state.wy.us

307/777-7170

Other locations

None

Year established and reorganized

Established 1973; reorganized into separate operating agency in 1993

Statutory references

Environmental Quality Act " 35-11-101 through 35-11-1803, W.S. 2000, as amended

Number of authorized personnel

Three full-time

Organization structure

The Governor appoints the seven members of the Environmental Quality Council, and the Wyoming Senate confirms the appointments. The EQC members are not full-time employees but are reimbursed and paid in the same manner as members of the Legislature. The EQC members and the three-person staff form a separate operating agency. There are no divisions or sections in the organization due to the size of the agency.

Clients served

The council serves the entire state, including private residents, organizations, and businesses.

Budget information

General Funds:

\$213,511

Total:

\$213,511

received several objections to water discharge permits (NPDES) for coalbed methane operators. Some of these objections have been resolved without going to a hearing, and several have been set for hearing.

The council held several rulemaking hearings that generated numerous public comments including the triennial review of the Water Quality, Chapter 1. The council approved the revised Chapter 1 after several hearings. Changes to the regulations include a new stream classification system and a process that allows DEQ to reclassify streams, except for Class 1 decisions. Decisions on reclassification can be appealed to the council.

The council has received a great deal of comment on odor standards and confined swine feeding operations over the last two years. Two petitions to revise odor standards for hog operations have been filed. The first petition was withdrawn and a second petition was adopted. The council invited the petitioner to its meetings to speak about odor standards, animal feeding operations, and odors from hog farms. The petition will be set for hearing and the odor standard will be reconsidered.

The council invited college professors from UW and WWCC to speak on issues relating to water quality, in particular, relating to coalbed methane issues. The public was invited to attend this informational session. A seminar sponsored by UW, the fourth Annual Stroock Forum on Wyoming Lands and People was also attended by several council members and staff. The topic of the seminar was related to energy development in the state.

The DEQ Administration, Water Quality Division, and the Air Quality Division made presentations at EQC meetings to discuss their programs and the general operation of the agency. The Land Quality Division and the Solid and Hazardous Waste Division will make their presentations at later meetings.

Strategic plan changes

The council is working on revising its strategic plan.

Environmental Quality Council organization chart

