

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 451 of 1994

324.8708 Environmental assurance advisory council.

Sec. 8708. (1) The director shall establish an environmental assurance advisory council composed of all of the following:

- (a) The director of the department of agriculture and rural development.
- (b) The director of the department of environment, Great Lakes, and energy.
- (c) The director of the Michigan State University Extension.
- (d) The director of the Michigan State University AgBioResearch.
- (e) Representatives of all of the following as appointed by the director to serve terms of 3 years:
 - (i) The United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency.
 - (ii) The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.
 - (iii) Conservation districts.
 - (iv) Farmers and other agricultural organizations.
 - (v) Nongovernmental conservation and environmental organizations.
 - (vi) Regulated agricultural industries.
 - (vii) A private consulting forester.
 - (viii) A member of the forest products industry.
 - (ix) A member of the logging profession.
 - (x) Other individuals as determined by the director.
 - (xi) A member representing each regional environmental assurance team established under section 8709.

(2) The council shall be co-chaired by the representative from Michigan State University Extension and a representative from 1 of the farmers and other agricultural organizations.

(3) The council shall advise the director on topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) MAEAP standards.
- (b) On-site evaluations for verification of specific aspects of a farming operation.
- (c) Water quality and environmental monitoring.
- (d) Protocols for verification and revocation of verification.
- (e) MAEAP activities.
- (f) Interagency coordination of conservation programs.
- (g) The use of money in the clean water fund created in section 8807 and other funding sources to promote MAEAP and activities to encourage more MAEAP-verified farms.
- (h) Options to increase assistance to assist small- and medium-sized farms in achieving MAEAP standards.
- (i) The creation of subcommittees as needed to address emerging and ongoing issues.
- (j) On-site evaluations of potential environmental, ecological, and economic benefits that can be realized by managing areas of the land that are not utilized for traditional or production agriculture practices.

(4) The council shall do all of the following:

- (a) Annually provide recommendations to the director on MAEAP standards and protocols for verification and revocation of verification for consideration by the commission of agriculture and rural development.
- (b) Annually submit a report to the department that outlines activities, accomplishments, and emerging issues. The department shall share this report with the agriculture community.

(c) Provide recommendations to the director on the creation of a tiered recognition program for farms working toward MAEAP verification. To qualify for the tiered recognition program, farmers must have completed educational programs, conducted appropriate farm assessments, and implemented conservation practices as approved by the director. The tiers may be used to recognize a farm's movement toward MAEAP verification.

(d) Beginning April 1, 2022, provide biannually, or at the request of the director, recommendations to the director and the legislature on incentives and program modifications to increase participation in MAEAP.

(e) Annually provide recommendations to the director on funding for research projects that address impediments to verification and improve MAEAP practice standards.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995;—Am. 2011, Act 2, Imd. Eff. Mar. 9, 2011;—Am. 2013, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 6, 2013;—Am. 2015, Act 118, Eff. Oct. 1, 2015;—Am. 2021, Act 123, Imd. Eff. Dec. 17, 2021.

Compiler's note: For abolishment of the groundwater advisory council and transfer of its powers and duties to the department of agriculture, see E.R.O. No. 2007-5, compiled at MCL 324.99907.

Popular name: Act 451

Popular name: NREPA