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# MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

## EQB Monitor, January 27, 2026

Minnesota Environmental Quality Board sent this bulletin at 01/27/2026 12:00 PM CST



Weekly announcements and environmental review notices

Volume 50, Number 4

January 27, 2026

### Announcements

#### Environmental Review Technical Assistance Survey

If you completed an environmental review process in 2025 and submitted a notice for the Monitor, we want to hear from you! Tell us how we're doing providing guidance and assistance by taking this [short five-question survey](#). Your responses are for EQB use only and will help us provide better assistance for you in the future.

#### EQB Public Board Member open positions

Applications are now open for Environmental Quality Board Public Board Member positions representing Minnesota's Congressional Districts 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8. Serving on our board provides a unique opportunity to shape environmental issues in Minnesota. Public Board Members bring the voices of Minnesotans from around the state into decision making, helping the Board think in new ways about environmental challenges and solutions. To learn more and apply, visit the EQB's [Open positions webpage](#). Applications are open through February 13, 2026.



## Environmental review project notices

EQB publishes environmental review notices provided by responsible governmental units. For more information on a project undergoing environmental review, click on the individual project links below. You can also find information about active projects in your community on the [Environmental Review Projects Interactive Map](#).

### [Waterside Estates Development EAW](#)

**Location (city/township; county):** Fairview Township; Cass

**Process:** EAW

**Step:** EAW available

**End of comment period:** February 26, 2026

**Project description:** UC-Barefoot Bay, LLC proposes to develop approximately 115 acres on 10 parcels in Fairview Township, Cass County into residential land use. The proposed project will construct 79 residential lots, 2 outlots, an amenity center, utilities, and internal road network. The amenity center will provide access to docks and boat slips, as well as beach and dock access to Gull Lake. The development will be constructed as a Conservation Development Design Planned Unit Development (PUD), following the natural topography and vegetation of the site.

**Location of public documents:** Cass County Courthouse, Environmental Services Department, 303 Minnesota Ave W, Walker, MN 56484

**Responsible governmental unit and contact:** Cass County, [Scott Wold](#), 218-547-7256

### [LEAR000946 Lease Expansion – Soring Pit Project](#)

**Location (city/township; county):** Grand Rapids; Itasca

**Process:** EAW

**Step:** EIS need decision

**Responsible governmental unit decision:** Negative (no EIS ordered)

**Responsible governmental unit record of decision date:** January 12, 2026

**Project description:** The Soring Pit is located on Minnesota Trust Land leased to Hawkinson by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The lease is for the removal of earth materials per cubic yard. Materials allowed to be extracted with the lease boundary include sand, gravel, boulders, and uncrushed rock. The lease will be in effect from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2027, with an option to renew. Revenues generated from the lease go to support State of Minnesota's Permanent School Fund.

**Location of public documents:** City of Cohasset, 305 NW 1st Ave, Cohasset, MN 55721

**Responsible governmental unit and contact:** City of Cohasset, [Anthony Valtinson](#), 218-328-6225 x20

### [Larson Quarry Expansion](#)

**Location (city/township; county):** Grey Cloud Island Township; Washington

**Process:** EIS

**Step:** EIS preparation notice

**Project description:** Holcim-MWR, Inc. proposes to expand their existing limestone quarry, known as the Larson Quarry, to the east onto an adjacent 148-acre property that they own located east of County Road 75. The Larson Quarry and expansion area is in Grey Cloud Island Township, Washington County, Minnesota. No change in quarry operations or production levels is proposed. The expansion will extend the life of the mine by 20-25 years.

**Summary of scoping decision:** 36 public and agency comments were received during the EAW comment period. Public comments raised concerns about the potential for significant impacts to cultural resources and archaeological sites, including whether required review steps with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) were completed. Comments also noted the proposed removal of a significant vegetative stand, with insufficient mitigation measures identified. While these concerns do not necessarily meet the definition of a significant impact on their own, the responses to comments identified

multiple items that need to be updated in the EAW. Based on the issues summarized above, the proposed project may have the potential for significant environmental effects, as defined under Minnesota Rule 4410.1700, subpart 7, and further study is necessary to adequately address these concerns.

**Location of public documents:** Washington County Public Works, 11660 Myeron Rd N, Stillwater, MN 55082

**Public meeting date, time, location:** January 14, 2026, 2:45 p.m., Online meeting

**Public meeting virtual link:** [Join online meeting](#)

**Responsible governmental unit and contact:** Washington County, [Daniel Elder](#), 651-430-4307

### [Downtown Duluth Alternative Urban Areawide Review](#)

**Location (city/township; county):** Duluth; St. Louis

**Process:** Large AUAR

**Step:** Final order for review

**Project description:** The City of Duluth is preparing an AUAR for an approximately 335 acre area encompassing the traditional downtown, Essentia Health Medical Campus and surrounding Hillside neighborhood, as well as the proposed "Lot D" development in the Bayfront area. The purpose of this AUAR is to prepare for infill or redevelopment of key sites within this broader area. Two development scenarios will be evaluated as part of the AUAR which include an existing conditions scenario and a maximum mixed use (commercial and residential) redevelopment scenario consistent with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan.

[Downtown Duluth Alternative Urban Areawide Review project link provided by RGU](#)

**Location of public documents:** Duluth City Hall, 411 West First Street, Duluth, MN 55802

**Responsible governmental unit and contact:** City of Duluth, [Jason Mozol](#), 218-730-5331

### [City of Empire - Northwest Alternative Urban Areawide Review](#)

**Location (city/township; county):** Empire; Dakota

**Process:** Large AUAR

**Step:** AUAR adoption

**Responsible governmental unit decision:** Adequate

**Responsible governmental unit record of decision date:** January 19, 2026

**Project description:** The AUAR Study Area encompasses an area totaling approximately 3,293 acres on 66 parcels in the City of Empire, Dakota County, Minnesota. The AUAR Study Area is envisioned as an opportunity to enhance a strategic planning approach to future development for the City of Empire. Three scenarios are proposed for evaluation in the AUAR. Scenario 1 (Sports Complex) and Scenario 2 (Town Center) include the development of low-density residential, medium-density residential, high-density residential, mixed-density residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial, and greenway/trail land uses within the AUAR Study Area. Scenario 3 focuses on future land use as outlined in the City of Empire 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

[City of Empire - Northwest Alternative Urban Areawide Review project link provided by RGU](#)

**Location of public documents:** Empire City Hall, 3385 197th Street, Farmington, MN 55024

**Responsible governmental unit and contact:** City of Empire, [Charles Seipel-Teng](#), 651-463-4494

## General notices

Notices published in this section may be required under Minnesota Statute or Rule.

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT PERMIT

**Notice description:** The Applicants propose to construct a new 2.9-mile 115 kV single-circuit transmission line between Great River Energy's existing Perham to Rush Lake 115 kV transmission line and the new replacement Otto Substation. The applicants generally

requested a route width of 200 feet, with up to 750 feet around the substation and at the proposed crossing of U.S. Highway 10. The applicants indicate that the project will require a 100-foot right-of-way, 50 feet on either side of the centerline. Structures utilized for the Project will be wood or steel monopoles, 70 to 90 feet tall, and placed 350 to 400 feet apart. The applicants propose to begin construction in the fall of 2027, with an in-service date of summer 2028.

**Public meeting date, time, location:** February 2, 2026, 6:00 p.m., New York Mills City Hall (Ballroom), 28 W Centennial 84 Dr, New York Mills, MN 56567

**Public meeting date, time, location:** February 3, 2026, 12:00 p.m., Online meeting

**Public meeting virtual link:** [Join online meeting](#)

**Public meeting additional details:** Webinar Number: 2497 123 6569

Webinar Password: MnPUC! (667820 when dialing from a phone or video system)

Join by Phone: 1-855-282-6330

Toll Free Access Code: 2497 123 6569

**Contact:** Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, [Craig Janezich](#), 651-201-2203

## Fish kill reports

Minnesota Duty Officer reports pertaining to fish kills are summarized in the following table, in accordance with 103G.216, REPORTING FISH KILLS IN PUBLIC WATERS, Subd. 2 Reporting Requirement. These reports were received via the Minnesota Duty Officer prior to the submission deadline for this edition of the EQB Monitor. They represent the raw data/information provided by callers. For more information regarding fish kills in Minnesota see the [Department of Natural Resources](#). Call the Minnesota Duty Officer at 651-649-5451 or 800-422-0798 to report fish kills.

**No fish kill reports were received since the last publication.**

## Submit a notice to the *EQB Monitor*

The *EQB Monitor* is a weekly publication announcing environmental review documents, public comment periods and other actions of the Environmental Quality Board. The *EQB Monitor* is published every Tuesday at noon. Submissions to the *EQB Monitor* are due by 4:00 p.m. on the Tuesday one week prior to the intended publication date. Please see the [EQB Monitor schedule](#) for more details.

To submit a notice for publication:

[Access the EQB monitor submission service](#)

Questions? Contact EQB by phone at 651-757-2873 or email us at [EQB.Monitor@state.mn.us](mailto:EQB.Monitor@state.mn.us).

For more information on environmental review, please visit the EQB website or contact us at [env.review@state.mn.us](mailto:env.review@state.mn.us).



Environmental Quality Board | [eqb.state.mn.us](http://eqb.state.mn.us)

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