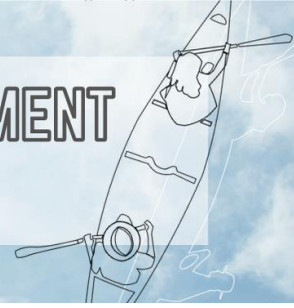


NAVIGATING THE LAW TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

AMPLIFYING VOICES: GETTING INVOLVED IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISIONS
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

March 2021



What kind of environmental decisions are made in Canada?

- Canadian environmental governance involves a range of different regulatory processes and mechanisms through which different organizations and individuals can share ideas to help shape environmental actions and outcomes.
- This includes environmental decision-making processes that guide the development of environmental laws and policies, determine whether proposed projects and other developments can proceed, and ensure public review of current and future practices, such as utility rates, is undertaken.
- Environmental decisions are made by both elected officials and government appointed decision-makers. The decision-making powers of such individuals can range from making recommendations about a specific course of action to issuing a final approval.

What is the role of the public in environmental decision-making processes?

- All Canadians have democratic rights that require all levels of government to involve the public in important decision-making processes, including those addressing environmental issues.
- The role of the public in environmental decision-making processes can vary depending on the type of process, the laws and policies from which that process originates, and the resources available to support public participation.
- This includes the opportunity to participate in a public hearing as an intervenor, making a public presentation to the responsible decision-maker, and providing written input.

Why is public participation important?

- The inclusion of meaningful public participation opportunities in environmental decision-making processes ensures local concerns, values and context are considered before a final decision is made.
- Public participation can influence the outcome of environmental decisions and can result in, for example, stopping a problematic natural resource development from getting approved.
- Including the public in environmental decision-making processes gives people with a range of different perspectives the opportunity to learn from each other.
- In some situations, participation in a decision-making process is required before you can challenge the final decision at a later date.



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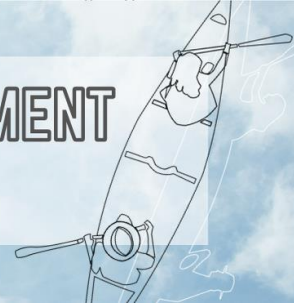
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What kind of participation opportunities exist in Manitoba?

- In Manitoba, there are a range of different participation opportunities available to the public at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels. This includes opportunities to participate in public hearings held by the following administrative tribunals.
- Clean Environment Commission (CEC): The CEC undertakes public reviews and holds public hearings, when requested by the Minister of Conservation and Climate, so Manitobans have the opportunity to play a part in ensuring the protection of our environment. This includes opportunities for the public to participate in the environmental assessment process under *The Environment Act*.
- Manitoba Public Utilities Board (PUB): *The Public Utilities Board Act* gives the PUB oversight and supervisory powers over public utilities in Manitoba such as Manitoba Hydro. The PUB is responsible for reviewing proposed utility rate changes (ex. cost of electricity) and holds public hearings that provide a range of different opportunities for public participation.

How can I prepare for public participation opportunities?

- Learn about the process you want to participate in and the type of participation opportunities available to you as early as possible. This includes identifying any available funding to support your participation.
- Identify the key issues you want to provide input on.
- Find experts and evidence that support your key issues.
- Collaborate with other organizations and individuals that share your concerns.
- Review any written submissions for mistakes and practice in advance if you are making a presentation.

For more information see:

- [Amplifying Voices: Getting Involved in Environmental Decisions](#) (webinar)
- [Amplifying Voices: Additional Resources](#)
- [Amplifying Voices: Discussion Questions](#)



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