



# **Charter of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association Water Quality Executive Council**

## **Purpose**

The Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) established the Water Quality Executive Council (WQEC) to carry out the strategic leadership and direction of the UMRBA water quality program. The purpose of the WQEC is to facilitate collaborative decision-making, cooperative action, and information sharing on behalf of the UMRBA Board of Directors and among the states of the Upper Mississippi River Basin (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin) and to provide a policy link between the collective and individual actions of the states and federal government.

## **Authority**

The WQEC was established by resolution of the UMRBA on August 24, 2006, consistent with Section V of the UMRBA Bylaws, which empowers UMRBA to establish committees.

The WQEC is advisory to the UMRBA Board and is charged to consider, decide, and/or recommend strategic or operationally significant policy, programmatic, and financial matters.

Each agency with representation on the WQEC participates under the auspices of its own authorities governing interagency coordination and water protection. The views expressed and actions taken by individual agency representatives and by the WQEC are not binding on any agency, unless the member agencies explicitly enter into a binding agreement.

## **Membership**

Membership of the WQEC shall be composed of the water quality administrator(s), or equivalent, of each of the following agencies:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency  
Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Members shall be appointed by the directors of the agencies named above. In the event that a member is unable to participate in a meeting of the WQEC, the member may designate another staff person to act on their behalf, on a temporary basis. The directors of the agencies and/or their duly appointed member representative may designate nonvoting members of the WQEC from within their respective agency or state.

Regions 5 and 7 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency shall be invited to serve as nonvoting members of the WQEC. Each of the two Regional Administrators shall be requested to appoint a representative from their agency to participate in and assist the WQEC.

The WQEC may invite federal liaisons to the UMRBA Board, or representatives on behalf of their respective agency, to participate in or provide advice to the WQEC.

## **Scope of Mission**

The primary focus of the WQEC shall be on the strategic direction and organizational resources related to the UMRBA water quality program, including interstate collaboration for the federal Clean Water Act on the interstate portion of the main stem of the Mississippi River, north of its confluence with the Ohio River. Basin-wide matters related to water quality or water protection may also be addressed by the Council, as mutually agreed upon by the Council members or as requested by UMRBA.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- i) Advance the directions and support the priorities of the UMRBA Board. Create an annual, strategic work plan with priorities and deliverables that align with the UMRBA water quality program goals. Develop and implement strategic initiatives.
- ii) Advise and guide the UMRBA Board on water quality-related policy, program, and resource matters.
- iii) Develop and recommend Board- or interstate-level communications, policies, and projects to advance the mission of UMRBA and the goals of the UMRBA water quality program.
- iv) Promote effective interstate implementation of Clean Water Act responsibilities by the states on the Upper Mississippi River.
- v) Develop consensus among the basin states' water quality administrators on major issues related to interstate and intrastate implementation of the Clean Water Act and other water quality responsibilities on the Upper Mississippi River.
- vi) Provide a forum for state water quality administrators to discuss policy, programmatic, and budgetary issues related to interstate and intrastate implementation of the Clean Water Act and other related water quality programs on the Upper Mississippi River.
- vii) Foster coordination between the states' water quality agencies and other state and federal agencies, particularly those represented on the UMRBA.
- viii) Establish standing committees and/or working groups to advance priorities of the WQEC. For each standing committee or working group, the WQEC will appoint membership, determine its terms of service or duration (e.g., ongoing function or specific project), the scope of its work, and any expectations for its operations and reporting to the WQEC. The WQEC shall consider action taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of any committee or working group.
- ix) Ensure that the products and efforts of the WQEC and its committees or work groups are recognized and incorporated, as appropriate, into the water quality programs of the states' environmental protection agencies.

## Operation

The position of WQEC Chair shall rotate on a biennial basis among its members. The duties of the Chair shall include presiding at meetings of the Council; consulting with UMRBA staff in preparation of agendas, materials, and work plans for the Council; and reporting to UMRBA on the activities of the Council.

The WQEC shall regularly communicate with the UMRBA Board and its established committees and working groups. The WQEC shall meet three times per year (spring, summer, and fall) and on an as-needed basis. One meeting per year shall be held jointly with the UMRBA Board and one meeting per year shall be held jointly with its established committees and working groups.

Whenever possible, the WQEC will attempt to achieve unanimous consent among its members, particularly on matters of policy.

Reports, policy papers, or position statements resulting from the deliberations of the WQEC shall be forwarded to the UMRBA Board for its consideration and action.

The UMRBA shall provide staff support to the WQEC, including making meeting arrangements, preparing meeting agendas and summaries, preparing background materials, developing draft reports and policy papers, and carrying out other activities as assigned by the WQEC, consistent with staff capacity as reflected in UMRBA's budget.

The WQEC shall prepare an annual work plan and estimate of funding needs for consideration by the UMRBA Board in development of the annual UMRBA budget. Sources of funding to support the WQEC may include special assessments on the Council's participating state agencies; UMRBA dues that support UMRBA's general operations; and grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts from outside sources.

The cost of participating in the WQEC and its committees and working groups shall be the responsibility of the state agencies. On an annual basis, the UMRBA Board will determine an allocation in the UMRBA budget to support travel for members of the WQEC, its committees, and its working groups.