

# UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY CHARTER

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## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

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**1. Committee's Official Designation (Title):**

National Environmental Education Advisory Council

**2. Authority:**

This charter renews the National Environmental Education Advisory Council (NEEAC) in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. 10. The NEEAC was established November 16, 1990, created by Congress to advise, consult with, and make recommendations to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on matters related to activities, functions, and policies of EPA under the National Environmental Education Act (the Act). 20 U.S.C. § 5508(b).

**3. Objectives and Scope of Activities:**

The NEEAC will provide advice and recommendations to the Administrator on environmental education matters as required by the Act, including preparation of a biennial report to Congress assessing environmental education in the United States. With respect to such matters, the Council shall be the exclusive advisory entity for the Administrator. The Council may exchange information with other advisory councils established by the Administrator.

**4. Description of Duties:**

The sole duty of the NEEAC is to provide advice to EPA. The NEEAC will provide advice and recommendations on matters as required by the Act, including:

- a. EPA's solicitation, review, and selection processes for environmental education training and grant programs
- b. The merits of individual proposals to operate the § 5 training program and the § 6 grant program, as requested by EPA.
- c. Nominations of eight Environmental Award recipients
- d. Other environmental education issues, including matters relating to activities, functions, and policies of EPA under the Act

- e. A biennial report to Congress as required by § 9(d)(l), which will:
  - (A) describe and assess the extent and quality of environmental education in the Nation.
  - (B) provide a general description of the activities conducted pursuant to the Act and related authorities over the previous 2-year period.
  - (C) summarize major obstacles to improving environmental education (including environmental education programs relating to national parks and wildlife refuges) and make recommendations for addressing such obstacles.
  - (D) identify personnel skills, education, and training needed to respond to current and anticipated environmental problems and make recommendations for actions to assure enough educational and training opportunities in these professions; and
  - (E) describe and assess the extent and quality of environmental education programs available to senior Americans and make recommendations thereon; describe the various Federal agency programs to further senior environmental education; and evaluate and make recommendations as to how such educational apparatuses could best be coordinated with nonprofit senior organizations across the Nation, and environmental education institutions and organizations now in existence.

**5. Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports:**

The NEEAC will submit advice and recommendations and report to the EPA Administrator through the Associate Administrator for the Office of Public Engagement and Environmental Education (OPEEE).

**6. Support:**

EPA will be responsible for financial and administrative support. Within EPA, this support will be provided by the Office of Environmental Education, within the Office of Public Engagement and Environmental Education (OPEEE), under the Office of the Administrator. EPA may pay travel and per diem expenses when determined necessary and appropriate.

**7. Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years:**

The estimated annual operating cost of the NEEAC is \$162,367 which includes 0.7 staff years of support.

**8. Designated Federal Officer:**

The agency head must designate a Federal officer or employee who must be either full-time or permanent part-time, to be the DFO for each advisory committee and its subcommittees, and the DFO must:

- A. Ensure their advisory committee activities comply with the Act, FACA Final Rule, their agency administrative procedures, and any other applicable laws and regulations;
- B. Approve or call all meetings of the advisory committee or subcommittee;
- C. Approve the agenda, except that this requirement does not apply to a Presidential advisory committee;
- D. Attend all advisory committee and subcommittee meetings for their duration;
- E. Fulfill the requirements under § 10(b) of the Act (codified at 5 U.S.C. 1009(b));
- F. Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines it to be in the public interest;
- G. Chair any meeting when so directed by the agency head
- H. Maintain information on advisory committee activities and provide such information to the public, as applicable; and
- I. Ensure advisory committee members and subcommittee members, as applicable, receive the appropriate training ( *e.g.*, FACA overview, ethics training) for efficient operation and compliance with the Act and FACA Final Rule.

**9. Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings:**

The NEEAC expects to meet approximately one (1) to two (2) times a year for in-person or virtual meetings and approximately nine (9) times a year by teleconference, subject to the availability appropriations. EPA will pay travel and per diem expenses when determined necessary and appropriate.

As required by FACA, the NEEAC will hold open meetings unless the EPA Administrator determines that a meeting or a portion of a meeting may be closed to the public in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c). Interested persons may attend meetings, appear before the committee as time permits, and comments with the NEEAC.

**10. Duration:**

The need for this committee is continuing, subject to the termination section below.

## **11. Termination:**

The Act specifically exempts the NEEAC from section 14(a) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act relating to termination. 20 U.S.C. § 5508(b)(6). The NEEAC, however, will file a new charter every two years.

## **12. Membership and Designation:**

The NEEAC will be composed of eleven (11) members appointed by the EPA Administrator, or designee, after consultation with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Members will serve as special government employees (SGEs). However, the Act provides that the conflict-of-interest provision at 18 U.S.C. § 208(a) does not apply to NEEAC members' participation in particular matters which affect the financial interests of their employers, 20 U.S.C. § 5508(b)(2).

As required by the Act, the membership of the NEEAC will consist of: (1) two members representing primary and secondary education (including one classroom teacher); (2) two members representing colleges and universities; (3) two members representing not-for-profit organizations involved in environmental education; (4) two members representing State departments of education and natural resources; (5) two members representing business and industry; and (6) one member representing senior Americans. In addition, a representative of the Secretary of Education will serve as an ex officio member. A representative of the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation may serve as an advisor to the NEEAC.

As required by the Act, the NEEAC membership will represent the various geographic regions of the country, will have minority representation, and will include members with professional backgrounds in scientific, policy, and other appropriate disciplines. 20 U.S.C. § 5508(b)(3).

In accordance with Executive Order 14035 (June 25, 2021) and consistent with law, EPA values and welcomes opportunities to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility on its federal advisory committees. EPA's federal advisory committees have a workforce that reflects the diversity of the American people.

## **13. Subcommittees**

EPA, or the NEEAC with EPA's approval, may form NEEAC subcommittees or workgroups for any purpose consistent with this charter. Such subcommittees or workgroups may not work independently of the chartered committee and must report their recommendations and advice to the chartered NEEAC for full deliberation and discussion. Subcommittees or workgroups have no authority to make decisions on behalf of the chartered committee nor can they report directly to the Agency.

**14. Recordkeeping**

The records of the committee, formally and informally established subcommittees, or other subgroups of the committee, will be handled in accordance with NARA General Records Schedule 6.2 and EPA Records Schedule 1024 or other approved agency records disposition schedule. Subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, these records will be available for public inspection and copying, in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

**15. Filing:**

September 4, 2024  
Agency Approval Date

August 29, 2024  
GSA Consultation

September 30, 2024  
Date Filed with Congress