

CONNECTICUT COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

POLICY REGARDING PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS OF MEETINGS

SECTION 1 - PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the conduct of Public Comment Periods of Meetings and Public Hearings of the Council.

SECTION 2 - DEFINITIONS:

“Council” means the Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality.

“Chair” means the Chairperson of the Council or any such Council member acting as a Chairperson during a meeting.

“Freedom of Information Act” means Connecticut General Statutes Sections 1-200 to 1-242, inclusive, as the same may be amended from time to time.

“Meeting” has the definition set forth in Section 1-200(2) of the Freedom of Information Act.

“Public Comment Period” means the portion of a Meeting where members of the public are permitted to address the Council.

SECTION 3 - PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS OF MEETINGS:

The following requirements and procedures shall be used to regulate Public Comment Periods of Meetings:

1. The agenda for Meetings may provide a period devoted to public comments; provided, however, that the Chair shall have the discretion to limit such Public Comment Period from the agenda when he or she determines such limitation to be in the best interest of the Council and the orderly conduct of a meeting.
2. The Chair shall, to the extent permitted by applicable law, have full discretion to make procedural rules regarding the conduct of any Public Comment Period of a Meeting, including but not limited to, setting an aggregate time limit for the Public Comment Period of the Meeting, setting time limits per speaker, limiting the number of speakers per entity or household, and limiting the subject matter which may be addressed during the Public Comment Period.
3. No individual or entity that has been recognized by the Chair to address the Council may yield their allotted time to another individual or entity.
4. The Chair may end the Public Comment Period of a Meeting to restore order and proper decorum.
5. The Chair may adopt such additional procedural rules during a Meeting as he or she deems necessary to impose order and proper decorum.

6. At no time shall the Chair or the Council members be required to respond to questions posed during Public Comment Periods of Meetings.

SECTION 4 - DECORUM WHEN ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL:

Individuals or entities wishing to address the Council during a Public Comment Period of a Meeting shall adhere to the following:

1. Individuals or representatives of entities may speak only when recognized by the Chair.
2. If a speaker is speaking on behalf of other persons, groups or entities, then the speaker shall state the nature of that representation.
3. All comments shall be addressed (i) to the Chair, and (ii) only during the Public Comment Period of a Meeting unless the Council votes to add an additional Public Comment Period of a Meeting.
4. Except when otherwise limited by the Chair, individuals and entities are limited to one public comment opportunity until all other individuals or organizations wishing to speak have had an opportunity to speak.
5. To help keep Meetings effective and efficient, presenters' comments must be germane to Council business and no person shall engage in disruptive, discourteous, threatening, or otherwise uncivil behavior. The Chair may limit or end the comments of any person who engages in this conduct.
6. Speakers shall refrain from repeating their own comments and testimony and the comments and testimonies of others. The Chair may limit or end the speaker's time if the speaker is excessively repetitive.
7. Members of the public shall refrain from interrupting the speaker who has been recognized by the Chair. The Chair may interrupt a speaker at any time to enforce the rules.