

BEIPC/Citizens Coordinating Council (CCC)

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Public Commenting

Q. What is the purpose for providing public comment?

A. Public comment helps to inform members of a board, commission, or governmental agency, how the public feels on specific issues. Depending upon the issue to be discussed or possible action to be implemented, public comment may be requested, or legally required when it pertains to certain regulatory actions. At a mandatory public hearing, the purpose is to provide citizens an opportunity to participate in the administrative process of decision-making for activities that may affect them.

Q. Why should I comment?

A. Public commenting allows concerns and questions regarding an action, or groups of actions, to be documented and become part of the legal record. The submittal of public comment assures that the issues and concerns expressed in the comment are considered by the public organization. Even more importantly, it is a way that citizens can help guide planning and influence decisions that may affect them and their community.

Q. How can I influence decisions?

A. One of the best ways to influence decision-making is to make comments based on fact. Familiarize yourself with the issue or concern you wish to speak about. Sometimes documents may be quite large, or technically complex, so check if there is a summary available for review. The following points may help citizens prepare for making effective comments:

- Understand the proposed action;
- Understand the steps for implementation of that action; and
- Make suggestions.

Additional tips for making effective comments are listed on the back of this sheet.

Q. What if I disagree with the law behind the action being proposed?

A. Changes to a law require legislative action and/or new rulemaking. Such concerns would be most effective if directed to the appropriate legislative or governmental representative.



***Coeur d'Alene Basin
Environmental Improvement
Project Commission***

www.basincommission.com

BEIPC/CCC Contact Info

BEIPC Executive Director

Terry Harwood, PH: 208-783-2528

CCC Chair

Jerry Boyd, PH: 509-455-6039

CCC Vice-Chair

Vera Williams, PH: 208-772-0584, Ext. 3006

• GET INVOLVED •
GET INFORMED • BE HEARD

TIPS FOR MAKING EFFECTIVE PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Know your subject. Review the information concerning an issue. Research additional information if needed.
 - Consider questions like: Where is this occurring; what is the goal; who will be making the decisions; what is the cost?
 - Understand the steps for a proposed action: Is there a prioritization of time, risk, percent of difficulty, seasonal issues, etc.?
 - Take a critical look at all of the information and focus on the issues or concerns that are the most important to you.
2. Decide whether your public comment will be written, verbal, or both. Make a draft written outline and then work on organizing and refining what you wish to say. Provide any necessary information that may be required such as your name, address, phone number, or email address.
3. Be concise, accurate and realistic. Clearly state your concern or position and the reasons behind it. Make sure your comments make sense and don't distort the facts.
4. If the information in question contains a wrong assumption or incorrect data – point this out.
5. Suggest possible solutions or alternatives. What will make it better? Are additional measures needed? Are some measures unnecessary?
6. Be polite. Even though you may be upset, be respectful and state your opinion or position objectively.
7. Be aware of your time limit. Usually verbal public comment is limited to 2-5 minutes (unless there is a smaller group). Written comments may allow for more input.
8. Know the date and time of the meeting for providing verbal public comment. Try to listen to others and avoid repetition. Mention if your comment was previously shared by someone else and the name of the person who made it. You may also wish to provide a written copy of your comment as well.
9. For written public comment, try to avoid using exactly the same language that others have used, or form-letter style comments. Expressing comments in your own words can be more effective and may show a different perspective.
10. Proof-read your written comments and make corrections if needed. Submit written public comment before the comment period deadline, and make sure your comments are legible.

TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENT, IT'S YOUR RIGHT!

(NOTE: Although the BEIPC/CCC may provide a forum for citizen comment and BEIPC consideration, it does not constitute formal public comment to any other public organization such as a federal or state agency).