



# Reflections on the EQB: Opportunities for Deepening Public Engagement

# Reflection Questions

- How does EQB add value to environmental work in Minnesota?
- What are the greatest opportunities for EQB in the coming 4 years?
- What are some concrete ways EQB can work to deepen partnerships and collaboration across sectors?

# Understanding and Evaluating Civic Engagement

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# MN Department of Human Rights

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## Project Goal

Develop an evaluation framework and list of metrics state agencies can use to evaluate their civic engagement

## Project Design

- Piloting different evaluation approaches with 3 state agencies: Olmstead Implementation Office, MN Department of Transportation, and Environmental Quality Review Board
- Working with advisory groups to design and test tools/approaches
- Literature review
- Use learnings from the 3 pilot projects and literature review to develop an overall framework for the state

# EQB evaluation purpose

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## BACKGROUND

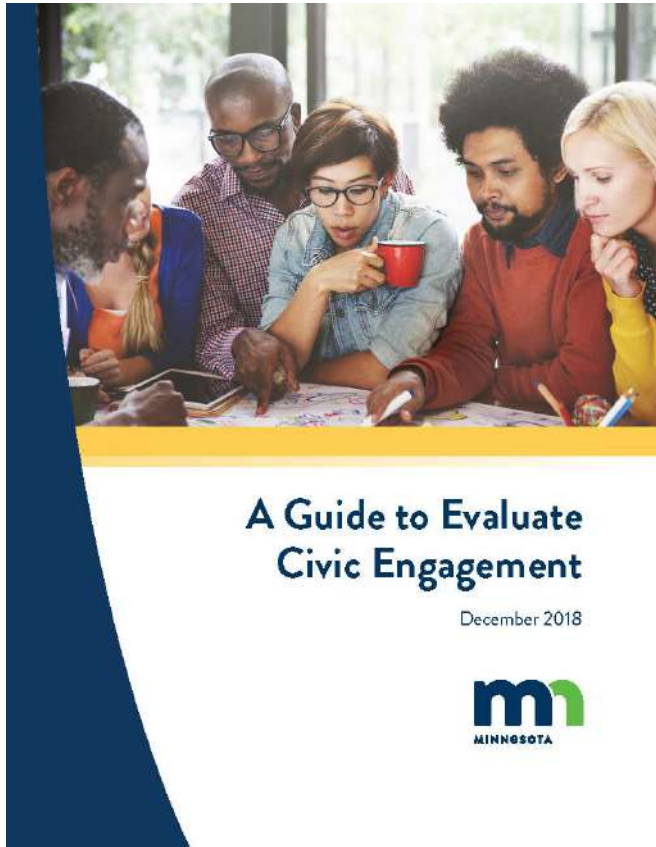
- EQB's resources and role are influenced by governor
- Undergoing strategic planning process to define role in current reality
- This evaluation ties into the strategic plan

## BROAD EVALUATION GOALS

- Better understand how stakeholders perceive EQB
- Gather insights on how EQB can better engage stakeholders

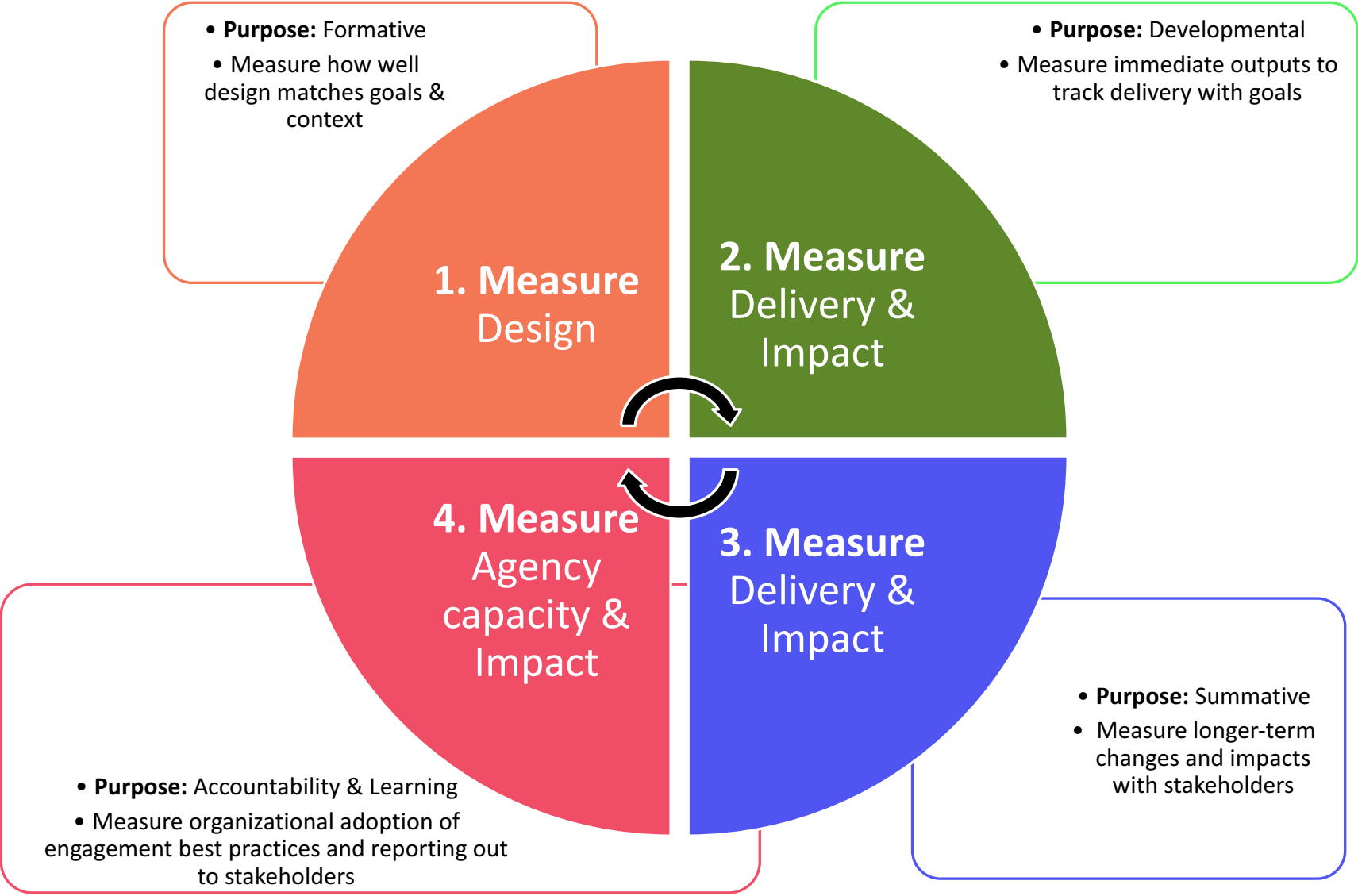
# Overall findings

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[https://mn.gov/mdhr/assets/rFinal\\_2018CivicEngagementUserGuide\\_t-opt\\_1.18.19\\_tcm1061-361141.pdf](https://mn.gov/mdhr/assets/rFinal_2018CivicEngagementUserGuide_t-opt_1.18.19_tcm1061-361141.pdf)

# Evaluating civic engagement: a working framework



# EQB process and findings

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## Main evaluation questions

1. What can we do to make the board meeting platform engage a wider range of participants and more diverse perspectives?
2. How do we best message the value/benefits of engaging in the EQB meetings platform?
3. What can be done to use the board meeting platform to create more meaningful dialogue between state leadership and residents?
4. What unique engagement opportunities could the EQB create in relation to other state agency platforms?
5. What are the ways that we can best leverage the EQB board meetings and activities to build momentum around an issue and/or create feedback loops with stakeholders?



# EQB process and findings

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## Process

1. Literature review
2. Interviews with 12 key stakeholders
3. Key stakeholder focus group

# EQB process and findings

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## Findings for building civic engagement

1. Prioritize open-ended and proactive relationship building
2. Engage using unconventional strategies
3. Expand strategic alignment with community networks
4. Leverage EQB's role as interagency convener
5. Focus on clear communication around engagement process and events
6. Be visionary and forward-looking

# Final thoughts

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## **This is just the start and it's exciting**

1. Unique opportunity and momentum to do innovative civic engagement work
2. Civic engagement always needs to be refined – continue to look for new ways
3. Lots of appetite in the public to engage with EQB issues
4. Interagency work will be critical and open doors for wider public engagement

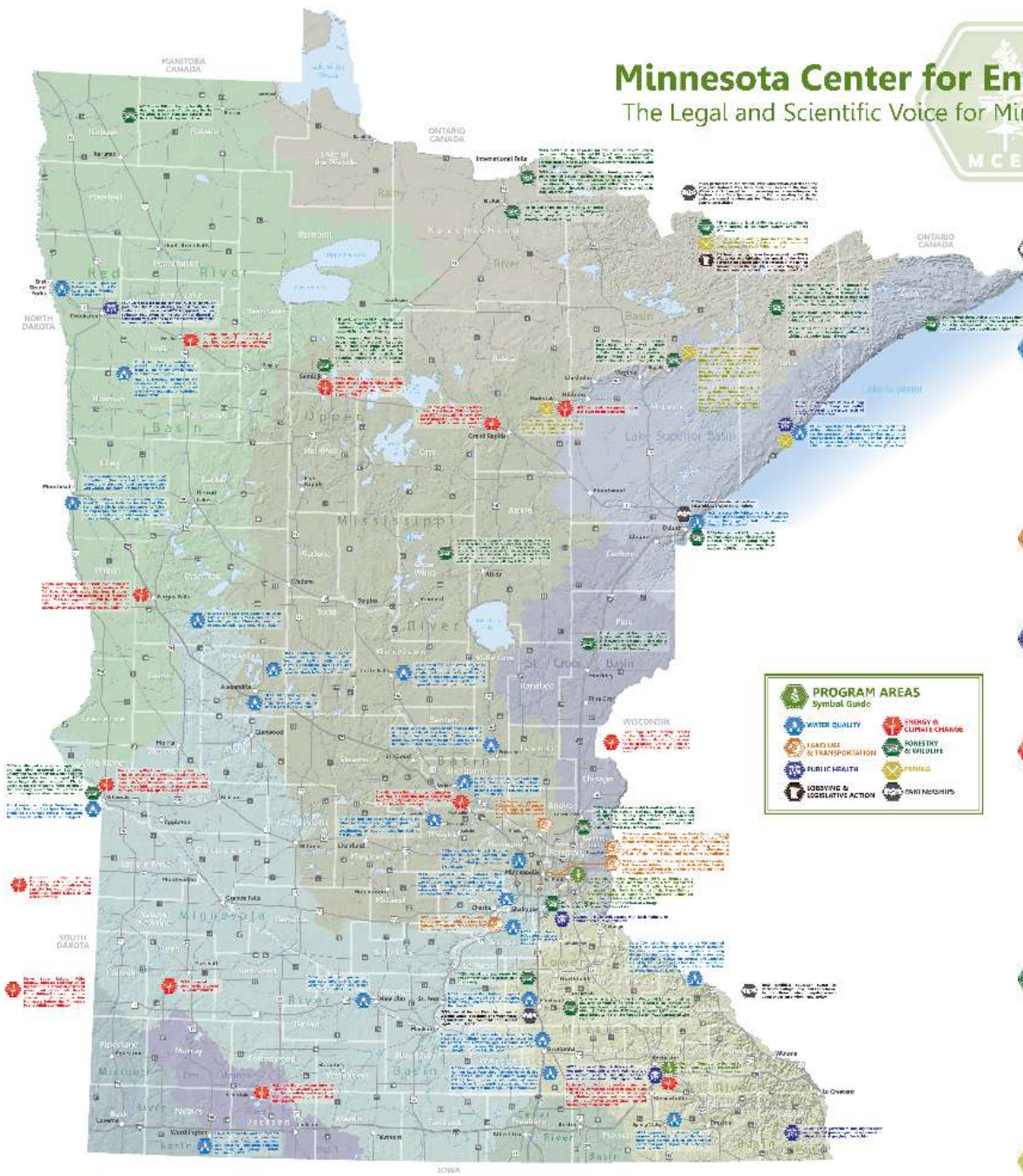


**CLIMATEGENERATION**

A WILL STEGER LEGACY

# Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

The Legal and Scientific Voice for Minnesota's Environment Since 1974



**PROGRAM AREAS**  
Symbol Guide

WATER QUALITY	ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE
LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION	HABITAT & WILDLIFE
PUBLIC HEALTH	FUNDING
LOBBYING & LEGISLATIVE ACTION	PARTNERSHIPS

**Backlog Environmental Protection**

- With our founders, helped Minnesota pass major environmental laws, including the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act and the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act
- Helped initiate and pass the Clean Water Act and the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment
- Helped pass the Wetland Conservation Act and the Lake Superior National Forest, which requires water planning to state, fill or restore a wetland first to try to avoid disturbing the wetland, or to replace any lost wetland areas, functions, and values
- Helped pass the Green Generation Energy Act, which requires Minnesota electric utilities to produce 25 percent of their electricity from renewable by 2022 and commit the state to cut global-warming pollution 80 percent from 2005 levels by 2050
- Helped secure the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act

**Clean Water**

- Helped Stop Boreas Mining from dumping toxic tailings into Lake Superior
- Led the Clean Water Project, a number of Minnesota Pollution Control Agency enforcement of the Clean Water Act, which brought 20 violators into compliance
- Led efforts to monitor Minnesota's River water to verify the Great Lakes Compact, which prevents other states from dumping water out of the Great Lakes basin
- Organized the nation's first "pollution watch" Clean Water monitoring project, which requires polluters that come from a variety of sources (instead of a single source such as a factory)
- Successfully reduced the amount of phosphorus discharged into Minnesota lakes and streams from wastewater treatment plants by commissioning an end-of-pipe study, so that we have the ability to protect that did a past job protecting water resources
- Wetland improvements in MPCA implementation of the Flow Three Act by discharging permit cost, successfully amending the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on the same
- Completed evaluation reports on Board of Soil and Water Resources regarding of Policy Amendment clean water funds, leading to dozens of improvements
- Was a litigant at the Minnesota Court of Appeals over a stormwater permit covering urban runoff from some 200 cities, ordering the MPCA to re-assess whether municipal discharges could "keep clean water clean" and updating anti-degradation requirements of the Clean Water Act
- MPCA helped stop Governor Dayton's signature from use of the Lake Superior Low Level by using mapping technology to educate legislators about the real impact of proposed changes on the ground in their own districts

**Sustainable Transit**

- Successfully lobbied the Minnesota legislature to override Gov. Tim Pawlenty's veto of the Transportation Bill allowing for a transit tax on new Twin Cities metro area for energy efficiency work
- Led the Sustainable Twin Cities campaign to allow energy from the metro area, also led to the question transit as well as more
- Together with a coalition of community groups, won the Climate Administration's Environmental Justice Award for work on the Stop for Fuel Cell Car and related three orders in the Twin Cities Light Rail Central Corridor, thereby making the service more accessible to disadvantaged neighborhoods
- Efforts on the Stop for Fuel Cell Car led to systemic changes in federal transit policy to broaden considerations for awarding line projects for urban funding

**Healthy People**

- Convinced the Board of Pollution Prevention to work with industry leaders to reduce the production of toxic PVC bags and tubing
- Helped pass a law that slowed the over-application of pesticides and that required public notification of scheduled pesticide use
- Convinced that MPCA officials met regularly with industry to make down the statewide mercury clean-up plan. As a result, tougher standards were created
- Included and helped pass legislation to make Minnesota a leader in environmental health monitoring. Including a new monitoring program that reveals high mercury levels in babies living on the North Shore of Lake Superior
- Included and helped pass legislation directing the Department of Health to lower the "recommended" vitamin levels to protect children exposed to lower amounts of lead

**Clean Air**

- Convinced the state of Minnesota's Clean Air Act enforcement
- Successfully persuaded Koch Refinery to cut ammonia in half over a two-year period
- Co-founded Clean Air Minnesota with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce to promote voluntary steps to reduce greenhouse gases and fine particulate emissions, which won an EPA award for Project Green Schools bus retrofit program

**Clean Energy**

- Prevented the proposed Lynx nuclear power plant from being built
- Organized construction of the proposed the State's coal-fired power plants before the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission and suspension of power lines into Minnesota before the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. As a result, the plant was not built
- Prevented the Minnesota PUC to order utilities to dedicate transmission capacity for power from the Brookings, S.D., to Twin Cities power line
- Interfered to support creation of solar energy industry to serve 200,000 energy-related energy needs, the first time in Minnesota regulatory history
- Helped convince Minnesota Power to reduce the Lacey and Terrace Harbor coal-fired electric generation units
- As part of Minnesota 2020, successfully passed worked to pass legislation to establish carbon neutral building construction goals to make buildings more energy efficient
- Prevented the Minnesota PUC to require the "extreme-risk" which will require it to update the low cost of air pollution control by carbon, fine particulates, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide
- Secured commitment from the State Energy to retire coal as the largest coal units as part of its integrated resource plan
- PUC's over a 4-year battle that ensures that regulators put a price tag on climate change when making decisions about new and existing fossil fuel-fired power plants

**Healthy Natural Resources**

- Helped prevent the active use of arsenic in the BWCA Wilderness
- Helped state and county state water Board restoration project in the Red River Valley that protected the Red River from 25 environmentally damaging improvement projects
- Stopped forest fragmentation in Green Ridge in northern Minnesota
- Prevented 22 acres of old growth forest that were to be harvested in the boreal forest
- Prevented the construction of the proposed bridge for Interstate 356 across Blackhawk Lake, allowing lake and wildlife habitat to remain undisturbed
- Prevented hundreds of acres of wetlands in Savage, home to one of the largest remaining elk herds in Minnesota
- Saved natural habitat in Big Stone County that would have been destroyed by an agricultural drainage project
- Was a co-lead on the Minnesota PUC to require better water in Lake Superior to protect the protection of vital natural resources
- Helped the settlement of a lawsuit with Wilson and Brown counties, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, requiring the counties to restore damaged wetlands in a wetland wildlife management area
- Successfully appealed the PUC to the Minnesota Court of Appeals to conduct a thorough review of wetlands before permitting the Sandpaper pipeline. The victory became a model for the pipeline companies before the Supreme Court decided they would not invest in the project

**Responsible Mining**


- Led the coalition working to tighten Minnesota's mining laws to protect the environment mining projects
- Prevented federal and state agencies from permitting a federal "leak" copper mining project by successfully petitioning to the EPA to issue the lowest possible rating to the Polkton draft EIS, forcing project proponents and state officials to come to the table
- PUC's over a 4-year mining, mining laws to protect the Iron-ore resources protected by the Polkton copper-iron mine. Our work resulted in a normal standard American package of one \$1 billion, one of the nation's highest

42<sup>nd</sup> Year Map

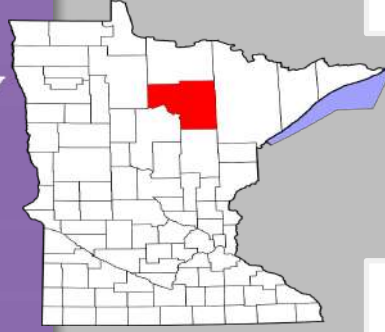
# VOICES FOR RURAL RESILIENCE



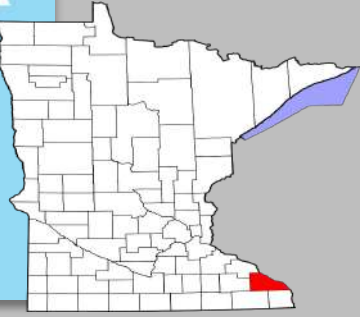
**MORRIS AREA CLIMATE DIALOGUE**  
JUNE 2014



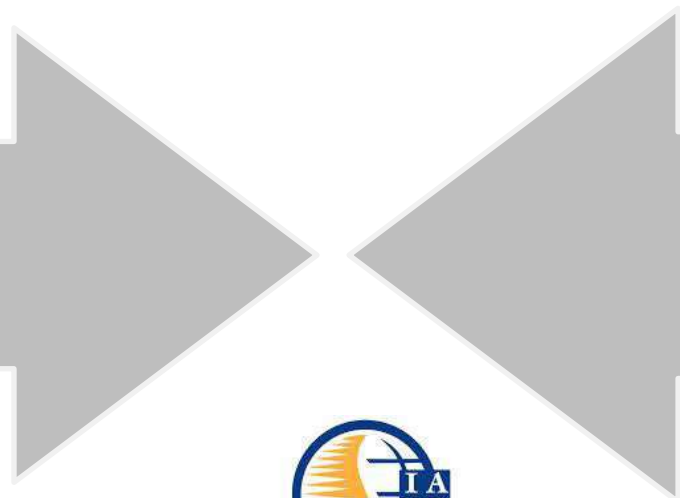
**ITASCA COUNTY CLIMATE DIALOGUE**  
MAY 2015



**WINONA COUNTY CLIMATE DIALOGUE**  
MARCH 2016

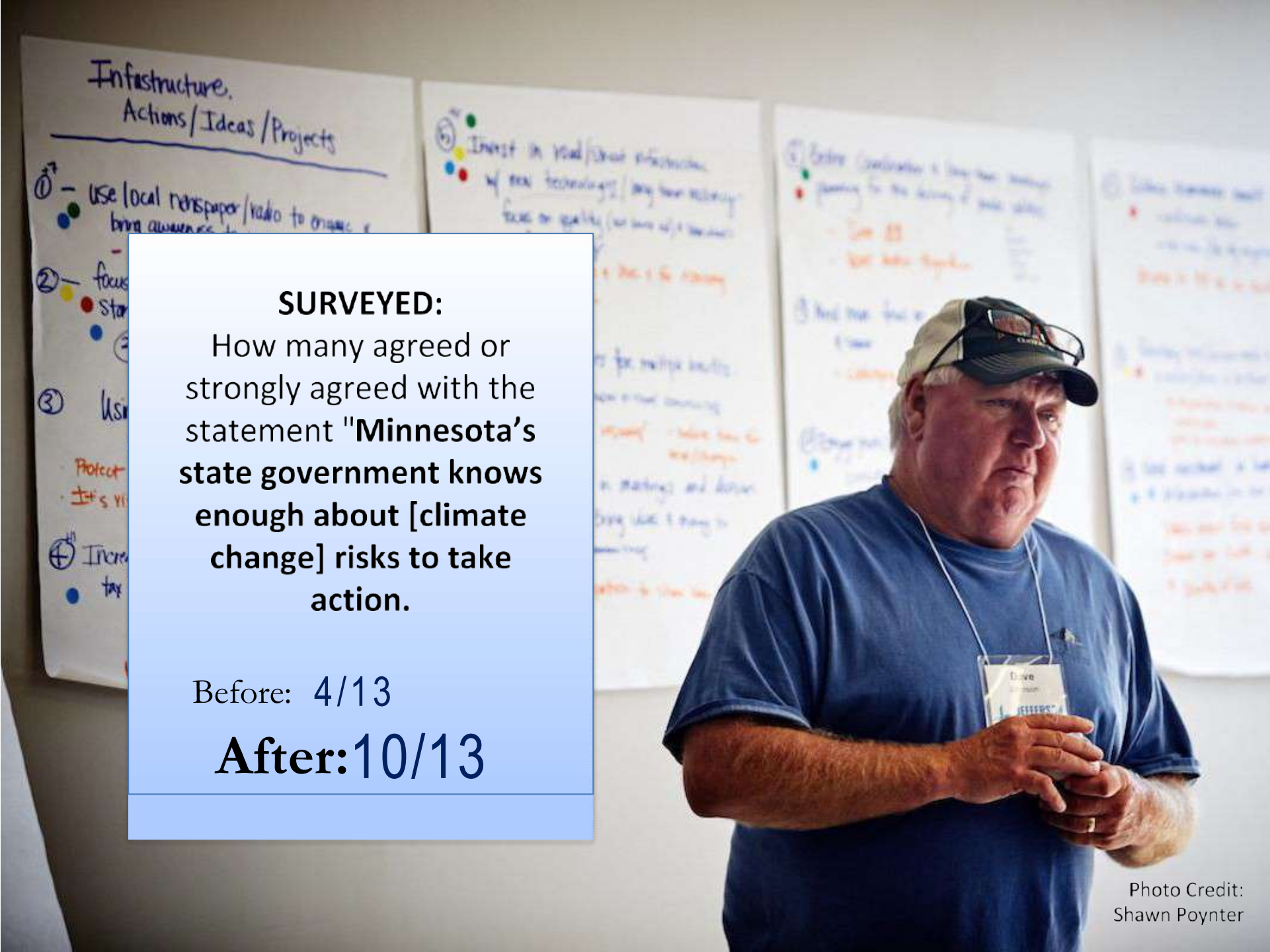


# State Convening









**SURVEYED:**

How many agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "**Minnesota's state government knows enough about [climate change] risks to take action.**"

Before: 4/13

**After: 10/13**

Photo Credit:  
Shawn Poynter



RURAL  
CLIMATE  
DIALOGUES



**VOICES  
FOR RURAL  
RESILIENCE**



# Plans for 2019 and beyond

- **Strengthening partnerships and enhancing public engagement**
  - **Stakeholder analysis**
  - **Partnership meetings**
  - **Meetings hosted by citizen members in their district**
  - **Public engagement continuous improvement**

# Thank You!

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