



VIRGINIA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ADVISORY COUNCIL  
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

**ELECTRONIC MEETINGS  
PUBLIC COMMENT FORM**

**WE NEED YOUR HELP--**Please give us your feedback regarding how meetings using electronic communications technology compare to traditional meetings where everyone is present in the same room at the same time.

1. Name of the public body holding the meeting: State Water Control Board/Department of Environmental Quality

2. Date of the meeting: June 29 2020

3. What are your overall thoughts or comments about this meeting? I felt like this process was undemocratic and inappropriate. It excluded residents who don't have broadband or strong cell service. And I was sooo frustrated that I had to spend an entire workday on a call and then, at the end of the day, it was clear the Water Board was entirely uninterested in my comment—they dismissed my concerns out of hand.

4. Where did you attend this meeting -- main meeting location OR from a **remote location**? (circle one)

5. Technology used for the meeting (audio only or audio/visual, devices and/or software used--please be as specific as possible--for example, speakerphone, iPad, Skype, WebEx, Telepresence, etc.):  
GoToWebinar audio and visual of public body

6. Were you able to hear everyone who spoke at the meeting (members of the body and members of the public)?

Poor				Excellent
1	<b>2</b>	3	4	5

COMMENT The DEQ microphone was very poor.

7. How easy was it for you to obtain agenda materials for this meeting?

Easy				Difficult
1	2	<b>3</b>	4	5

COMMENT It was released online too late

8. Could you hear/understand what the speakers said or did static, interruption, or any other technological problems interfere?

Easy				Difficult
1	2	3	4	<b>5</b>

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_

9. If the meeting used audio/visual technology, were you able to see all of the people who spoke?

Poorly  
1 2 3 4 5  
Clearly

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_ The video footage of the DEQ office poor quality

10. If there were any presentations (PowerPoint, etc.), were you able to hear and see them?

Poorly  
1 2 3 4 5  
Clearly

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_

11. Were the members as attentive and did they participate as much as you would have expected?

Less  
1 2 3 4 5  
More

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_ I can't believe that the Water Board ignored/dismissed all commenters\_

12. Were there differences you noticed in how the members interacted?

**With the other members present:**

Very Different  
1 2 3 4 5  
No Difference

**With members participating from other locations:**

Very Different  
1 2 3 4 5  
No Difference

**With the public:**

Very Different  
1 2 3 4 5  
No Difference

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_ Honestly, there are serious problems with the hearings held in person too, because the public is expected to take off time from work—the goal for the DEQ is to minimize public involvement, in my experience. \_\_\_\_\_

13. Did you feel the technology was a help or a hindrance?

Hindered  
1 2 3 4 5  
Helped

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_

14. How would you rate the overall quality of this meeting?

Poor  
1 2 3 4 5  
Excellent

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_ In addition to my concerns above, I was frustrated that the meeting began an HOUR later than scheduled. So I spent an hour of my workday, during an extremely stressful time (pandemic), on the phone, wondering if there was something wrong with my connection, when I have family and professional obligations I could have been attending to. I'd be more forgiving of this if the DEQ wasn't so strict about only allotting 3 minutes to each speaker, and making commenting such a major and exclusionary hassle. For you to guard the time of the DEQ and to completely disregard the time of the impacted public is the height of hypocrisy.

**THANK YOU. Please send your completed form by mail, facsimile or electronic mail to the FOIA Council using the following contact information:**

Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council  
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