

CHAPTER 2

Establishing an Environmental Advisory Council

Act 148 gives municipalities the authority to establish EACs by ordinance. These ordinances must be consistent with Act 148 and should include details on subjects such as officers, budget and duties. Since Act 148 does not mandate that Pennsylvania local governments establish an EAC, it is up to residents and stakeholders within a community to suggest the establishment of an EAC to their elected officials.

The wording of the statute is general enough to make it easily adapted by individual municipalities for their own ordinances. An example of this type of ordinance from Paradise Township, Monroe County, is included in Appendix II.

The establishment of an EAC can be incorporated into another environmentally based initiative of a municipality, with the powers and duties of the EAC then related to the goals of that initiative. In the example of Lower Makefield, Bucks County, the township passed a resolution to identify and preserve open space within its boundaries. The establishment of an EAC was included in this resolution as one of the means by which its goals would be accomplished. A copy of this resolution is included in Appendix III. It should be noted that in this example, the EAC was created without making use of the enabling statute.

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Above: Nockamixon Township, Bucks County, EAC on their annual quarry tour. Photo: Sharon Mendelson.

How to Get Started

To find out if there is an EAC in your community, call your municipal offices or your local officials. If there is no EAC and you are interested in establishing one in your municipality, you can:



Above: City of Easton, PA Environmental Advisory Council.

An EAC can develop in-depth information on natural resources and environmental issues for the comprehensive planning process.

- Visit EACnetwork.org to understand the role of EACs. Here you will find EAC case studies, sample ordinances, guidelines and much more.
- Join the EAC Network discussion at EACNetwork.org.
- Get to know your local elected officials.
- Attend several municipal meetings to understand how the meetings work and to gauge views on local issues.
- Attend training for EACs or elected officials - find training opportunities at EACnetwork.org
- Educate the governing body on the role of EACs. Some local officials may be concerned that the establishment of an EAC will create a new layer of bureaucracy when, in fact, EACs are only charged with advising and informing elected officials regarding environmental issues.
- Underscore the resource an EAC can be for local officials. For example, an EAC can develop in-depth information on natural resources and environmental issues for the comprehensive planning process and report on the environmental impacts of specific land use proposals.