

Pest Management Advisory Committee (PMAC) Handbook

PMAC's Role

The [Pest Management Advisory Committee \(PMAC\)](#) is a stakeholder committee established in 1992 pursuant to Food and Agricultural Code Section 12536 that is tasked with assisting the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) in identifying, facilitating, and promoting environmentally sound pest management practices and pest management systems.

The primary responsibility of the PMAC is assisting DPR in evaluating and selecting grants to fund through DPR's Pest Management Grants Programs: the [Alliance Grants Program](#) and the [Research Grants Program](#).

The PMAC is a formally designated decision-making state body. As stated in the [PMAC Charter](#), members are subject to specific, complex, legal requirements relating to conflicts of interest, public perception of bias, and open meeting act requirements in the performance of PMAC duties.

Important Terms and Definitions

- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** We follow the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Statewide IPM Program definition for IPM which states: "IPM is an ecosystem-based strategy that focuses on long-term prevention of pests or their damage through a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation, modification of cultural practices, and use of resistant varieties. Pesticides are used only after monitoring indicates they are needed according to established guidelines, and treatments are made with the goal of removing only the target organism. Pest control materials are selected and applied in a manner that minimizes risks to human health, beneficial and nontarget organisms, and the environment."
- **Quorum:** a majority of voting PMAC members (13 of the 24 members, excluding *ex officio* members of the PMAC) that must be present at meetings focused on grant application review or decision-making to ensure the decisions and recommendations made at that meeting are valid. Quorum procedures and requirements are set by the [Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act](#).
- **[Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act:](#)** the law set forth in California Government Code sections 11120-11132 that requires State boards and commissions to publicly notice their meetings, prepare agendas, accept public testimony and conduct their meetings in public unless specifically authorized by the Act to meet in closed session. Note:

typical PMAC meetings and proceedings are not authorized to be held in closed session and must be conducted in public.

How Does DPR Conduct Grant Application Review?

Applicants must meet all of the Eligibility Requirements set forth in the Solicitation and be able to meet all of the Terms and Conditions appropriate to applicant status as either a University of California/California State University System (UC/CSUS) or non-UC/CSUS applicant. DPR staff will review Proposal Applications to ensure that applicants meet all the Eligibility Requirements. PMAC members will only receive eligible Proposal Applications.

Proposal Applications are independently reviewed and ranked by DPR staff and the PMAC. Answers submitted in response to the Proposal Application questions will be considered by PMAC and DPR staff reviewers in determining their rankings of the Proposal Applications. PMAC reviewers and DPR staff will use the *Ranking Considerations for Reviewers* document from DPR when evaluating answers and justifying their rankings.

The PMAC will make grant funding recommendations to the Director via a consensus-based Proposal Application ranking process that occurs during a public meeting. DPR staff will also independently rank the Proposal Applications and provide a staff recommendation to the Director.

The Director considers these separate recommendations and makes the final project award and funding decisions. Applicants whose projects were not selected for funding are provided feedback after awards are announced.

The PMAC's Role in Grant Review

A PMAC member's first role during the grant review cycle is reviewing and ranking Proposal Applications. A document titled *Ranking Considerations for Reviewers* from DPR will be provided along with the eligible Proposal Applications.

During review, PMAC members should evaluate the specifics of a project's quality relative to the *Ranking Considerations for Reviewers* document provided by DPR, noting merits and concerns about each project to justify their rankings. Example merits may include statements such as: "The project has a well-defined target audience that will benefit significantly from this work" or "The economic components of the various tactics that will be employed will be appropriately evaluated." Example concerns may include statements such as: "The experimental plan does not include enough replicates" or "The Alliance Team does not have strong experience conducting projects such as this one." It is important to note that PMAC members should evaluate each Proposal Application based on its own validity and fundability, not in the context of optimizing the spending of available DPR grant funds.

Collectively, PMAC membership is intended to provide a broad view of IPM impact across

California. PMAC members should balance the desire for broad, meaningful impact need against project quality, which may at times mean recommending a slightly lower-ranked Proposal Application with a stronger potential impact across California over a higher-ranked Proposal Application with a lesser potential statewide impact. This priority-setting role is a strong component of the PMAC's chartered duties.

General Overview of PMAC Grant Application Review Meetings

PMAC grant application review meetings typically begin with introductions, opening comments from the Chair (DPR's Director), and orientation information. Additionally, a presentation may be given with an overview of recent Grants Program activities and funding. A quorum roll-call count is held before grant application review discussions and prior to any decision-making actions; any disclosed member conflicts of interest will be stated for the record at initial roll-call. Meetings will be webcast to the public for viewing via the CalEPA website (<https://video.calepa.ca.gov>).

A third-party facilitator leads the grant application review discussions. Grant application review discussions begin with a presentation of the Proposal Applications to be discussed. DPR staff calculate average rankings and standard deviation for each of the Proposal Applications using submitted pre-meeting rankings from PMAC members, this information is shared with PMAC members at the start of the discussion portion of the meeting. Prior to any in-depth discussion of individual projects, the facilitator will ask if PMAC members wish to omit any low-ranking Proposal Applications from the final recommendation, thereby identifying them as "un-fundable" by PMAC. If there is not complete consensus to omit a Proposal Application, the Proposal Application will be considered fundable by PMAC. Each grant application is then discussed individually, starting with the highest-ranking Proposal Application. Discussion is intended to focus on merits, concerns, and requested clarifications for each Proposal Application.

Once all Proposal Applications have been discussed, PMAC members re-rank the Proposal Applications, keeping in mind the pros and cons raised by other PMAC members during the discussion. When results of the re-ranking have been tabulated by DPR staff and presented to the PMAC, PMAC members perform a roll-call vote on submitting the collective re-ranking results as a final recommendation to provide to the Director.

Expectations for PMAC Members

PMAC members assist DPR in selecting grants for funding and identifying, facilitating, and promoting IPM practices and systems that are designed to minimize risk to public health and the environment. In fulfilling this role, PMAC members are expected to represent California stakeholders for the stakeholder category they are appointed to. Failure to meet the following expectations may result in removal from the PMAC (CCR Section 6256).

1. Ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that the member's role and participation in the proposal evaluation process is not compromised by actions or circumstances that

create conflicts of interest or potential public perception of bias related to any grant proposal(s). Examples of activities that could lead to conflicts of interest (COI) or public perception of bias include (but are not limited to):

- Proposals submitted by the member's employer or department, where the member is an employee of the State, of a local agency, or of the UC.
- Proposals a member advised on or helped develop.
- Proposals that would provide funding to the member.
- Proposals from a member's family.

A PMAC member who has a COI related to any grant proposal will be required to fully recuse from all proposal evaluation and meeting participation. Where a potential public perception of bias exists, a member should abstain from participating in ranking, discussing, re-ranking, or voting on proposals resulting from any solicitation in which they have a noneconomic COI under common law or where there appears to be a potential bias.

When a member must recuse, that member's input to the committee's decision-making process is restricted and the committee is prevented from receiving the full benefit of the member's valued expert participation. In addition, recusals may negatively impact our ability to achieve meeting quorum.

2. PMAC members must formally disclose to DPR any real or potential COI or public perception of bias circumstances related to any grant applications. Disclosure to DPR must occur as soon as possible so that DPR can support PMAC members in ensuring that the appropriate actions are taken relative to the disclosed circumstances. Please review the [PMAC charter](#) for further information regarding COI.
3. When a COI or public perception of bias circumstance exists related to a proposal application, the appropriate action will be full or partial member recusal as follows:
 - a. When there is a COI, it is expected that the Primary Member will fully recuse from participation in the Proposal evaluation and PMAC meeting process; if eligible, the Alternate will serve in the place of the Primary Member.
 - b. In the rare potential scenario when multiple members have COIs requiring recusal such that quorum is threatened, the DPR legal office must be consulted.
 - c. When there is a circumstance involving member bias, or potential public perception of bias regarding a specific proposal, the member should partially recuse. In the case of partial recusal, the member may not rank, discuss, or vote on the specific proposal(s) the member is required to recuse from, but is otherwise allowed to participate in the Proposal evaluation, ranking, and meeting process, including the final overall recommendation vote.
 - d. When a PMAC member is required to disclose a COI or recuse from participation in any way, it must appear in the PMAC's official meeting record, along with the reason for recusal.

4. PMAC members should appropriately weigh the impacts of their participation in grant proposals against their ability to meet their obligations as PMAC members to participate in grant review, discussion, and recommendation decision-making. PMAC members are discouraged against taking any actions which would create a COI or give an appearance of bias, causing them to have to fully or partially recuse themselves from participation in the grant proposal process (e.g., advising on a proposal that will be heard by PMAC while serving as a PMAC member; participation in the preparation of, or staffing of, a grant proposal). In order to not give the appearance of being pre-decisional or lobbying outside of a public meeting in violation of the [Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act](#), PMAC members should refrain from expressing support for specific grant proposals (in verbal communications or through letters of support) until the quarterly PMAC proposal review meetings. Expressions of support in advance of a public meeting may require the PMAC member to partially recuse themselves from participation in the grant proposal process.
5. PMAC members are expected to review Proposal Applications for the Alliance Grants Program and the Research Grants Program and submit their completed reviews by the relevant deadline. If a PMAC member is unable to review the Proposal Applications, they must contact DPR staff as soon as possible. Each member organization should submit ONE set of proposal rankings per grant review meeting, unless there is an issue with a COI.

DPR staff and the facilitator carry out a significant amount of preparation to consolidate PMAC member reviews and organize the meeting's discussion. Delays in returning reviews, or failing to complete reviews, affects other PMAC members and undermines the integrity of the PMAC meeting process.

6. Every PMAC member will nominate one qualified Alternate candidate from their organization/stakeholder category (an alternate can be affiliated with another organization within the PMAC representative's category) to attend meetings in their absence as necessary due to a COI or scheduling conflict. Members will submit Alternate candidate nominations to DPR along with supporting documentation, such as contact information and a résumé/curriculum vitae.

Alternates are expected to work with the Primary member to ensure all membership responsibilities are fulfilled. If an Alternate is to attend a meeting for which the Primary has submitted grant proposal rankings, they should be familiar with the rankings and reasonings behind the rankings so they can best represent their organization during discussions and re-rankings.

7. PMAC members must make a reasonable effort to attend quarterly PMAC meetings. If a PMAC member is unable to attend, they must contact DPR staff as soon as possible to let them know they will be absent and if their Alternate will be serving in their place.

Member attendance helps ensure that quorum is met, ensures representation of

organizational and public interests, and demonstrates respect for the committee's time. Excessive absences, and lack of communication with DPR regarding absences, may lead to the dismissal of a PMAC member at the Chair's discretion. (CCR section 6256)

8. PMAC members are expected to fully participate for the entirety of scheduled quarterly PMAC meetings to support collective discussion and decision-making and to ensure that the PMAC has the quorum necessary to conduct business or carry out votes.

If a PMAC member needs to leave a meeting early, notice must be given to DPR staff as soon as possible, preferably in advance of scheduled meetings. If a member must temporarily leave a meeting with the intent to return before the meeting ends, and the absence results in the member missing a substantial portion of the meeting and/or meeting discussion, the member may become ineligible to participate in voting and re-ranking processes. Further, such absences are to be avoided because they can result in the meeting losing the quorum necessary to continue to conduct business or carry out votes.

9. The member who answers to the roll call record when the meeting is first convened for any meeting, whether Primary or Alternate, will be the sole decision-making and representing member for that organization for the entirety of that meeting. No member substitution or change in member attendance is allowed after roll call. Therefore, if the Primary member establishes attendance in roll call, the member's Alternate may not attend and act in any official representative or decision-making capacity—or act as an intermediary to relay information from the meeting—for any portion of that meeting, even if their Primary member leaves early or for an extended temporary period of time. In such cases, if a Primary member cannot participate fully in the meeting and wishes for their organization to participate fully in the decision-making process, arrangements must be made for the Alternate to attend the entire meeting in the Primary member's place.

Inappropriate behavior during meetings, such as engaging in sidebar conversations, disappearing from the meeting, being disrespectful to other members, or not actively participating in the discussion (i.e., multitasking) may be grounds for removal from the PMAC.

10. PMAC members must submit a re-ranking of the grant applications following discussions.

If a PMAC member was unable to review and rank applications prior to the meeting due to extenuating circumstances, they may not submit re-rankings. However, the member is still allowed to participate in the discussions and the final recommendation vote.

11. In accordance with the [Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act](#), PMAC meetings are open to the public and are on the public record. As such, any meeting or communication

amongst a quorum of PMAC members where PMAC matters which are not purely procedural in nature are discussed must be conducted during a public meeting.

The Act expressly prohibits the use of direct communication, personal intermediaries, or technological devices that are employed by a majority of the members of the state body to develop a collective concurrence as to action to be taken on an item by the members of the state body outside of an open meeting. (§ 11122.5(b).) This includes “serial meetings” which are a series of communications, each of which involves less than a quorum of the legislative body, but which taken as a whole, involves a majority of the body’s members (e.g., Person A reaches out to a quorum of the members of the PMAC or their representatives on an individual basis to discuss an agenda item or a specific application—courts have found this to constitute a meeting).

In order to avoid the potential for a “serial meeting” to occur, DPR recommends that PMAC members engage judiciously with one another about PMAC matters outside of a public meeting and be selective about the subject of communications as well as the recipient of these communications. Systematic communications through which a quorum of the body acquires information or engages in debate, discussion, lobbying, or any other aspect of the deliberative process, either among themselves or between board members and the staff may violate¹ the Act. Additionally, comments regarding grant proposals that are sent to DPR after a PMAC grant proposal review meeting has concluded cannot be considered as part of PMAC’s recommendation, as it would violate the Act.

12. PMAC members will provide DPR staff with updated contact information in a timely fashion. This ensures that members receive communications from DPR without delay.
13. If a PMAC member's organizational affiliation changes, or they no longer have a basis for representing their assigned stakeholder category, or if there is a need to resign from the committee, they are expected to notify DPR staff as soon as possible.

Please note that a change in affiliation may make a current member inappropriate for a given PMAC stakeholder representation category. In order for DPR to ensure full stakeholder membership and meet quorum requirements, timely communication of member organizational and stakeholder representation status changes is essential.

Expectations For DPR

1. DPR will send all email communications to PMAC members from the dprpmgrants@cdpr.ca.gov email address.

¹ The Act provides for remedies and penalties in situations where violations have allegedly occurred. Depending on the particular circumstances, the decision of the body may be overturned (Gov. Code § 11130.3), violations may be stopped or prevented (Gov. Code § 11130), costs and fees may be awarded (Gov. Code §11130.5), and in certain situations, there may be criminal misdemeanor penalties imposed as well. (Gov. Code § 11130.7.)

2. DPR will respond to communications from PMAC members as soon as possible and will notify members if replies are expected to take longer than usual.
3. DPR will send out a proposed meeting schedule and Outlook calendar invites near the end of the current year for the following year's meeting schedule.
4. DPR will send grant Proposal Application review materials to PMAC members as soon as the eligibility review has been completed and shall provide members with ample time for review.
5. DPR will support PMAC members in determining the proper actions that must be taken relative to real or perceived conflicts of interest or public perception of bias a member may have tied to Proposal applications being reviewed by the PMAC.
6. DPR will email PMAC members agendas for upcoming meetings as soon as they are finalized and will send updated agendas containing digital connection information (when applicable) no less than two days prior to scheduled meetings.
7. DPR will email PMAC members a packet of documents containing compiled grant Proposal Application review scores, a copy of the Act, and relevant Powerpoint presentations prior to scheduled grant proposal review meetings.
8. DPR will notify PMAC members of the Director's final grant funding decisions at the meeting following a grant Proposal Application review meeting.

DPR Contact Roster

General PMAC Inquiries: dprpmgrants@cdpr.ca.gov

PMAC Coordinator – Matt Fossen, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)
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PMAC Administrative Coordinator – Hannah Jensen, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
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Agricultural Pest Management Unit Program Manager – Leslie Talpasanu, Environmental Program Manager I
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Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Branch Chief – Aimee Norman, Environmental Program Manager II
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Assistant Director – Ken Everett Ken.Everett@cdpr.ca.gov

Links

PMAC Charter: <https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/pmac/charter.pdf>

PMAC Roster: <https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/pmac/pmacroster.pdf>

DPR Pest Management Grants Programs: <https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/dprgrants.htm>

Handy Guide to Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act:
https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/publications/bagleykeene2004_ada.pdf

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