

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources

MEMO: Agenda Item # 9

DATE: December 10, 2025

SUBJECT: Proposal evaluation and recommendation process

Summary

Members will receive proposals for evaluation in the spring of 2026. Before evaluations begin, the commission needs to confirm the evaluation and recommendation process it wishes to use for the 2027 RFP cycle.

At a high level, the evaluation and recommendation process includes the following steps:

1. Staff review all proposals for completeness and eligibility issues and score all proposals.
2. Commission members evaluate all proposals (Evaluation #1).
3. The commission selects proposals for further consideration based on the results from Evaluation #1 (First Cut).
4. Selected proposals present before the commission.
5. Commission members provide additional evaluation (Evaluation #2).
6. The commission selects proposals for recommendation to the Legislature based on the results from Evaluation #2 (Second Cut).

This memo describes in more detail the process and decisions needed from the commission. The process presented below is identical to the process followed by the commission last year, with potential alternative presented.

Staff request the commission at least make decisions today on step 1 (Action #1: Presentation of Staff Scores), steps 2-3 (Action #2: Evaluation #1 and Selecting Proposals for Presentation), and step 4 (Action #3: Presentations Format and Timing). Making these decisions today may eliminate the need for a commission meeting in the spring during legislative session and provide clarity to applicants on how the process will work. Staff have provided sample motions for approval of each action. Staff have also provided a sample motion to adopt the entire proposal evaluation and recommendation process (Actions #1 to #5) with a single motion.

Action #1: Presentation of Staff Scores

The commission needs to confirm how it would like staff to present the results of its review.

Staff review each proposal received for completeness and eligibility issues and evaluate them based on the LCCMR-adopted evaluation criteria. The results of the staff evaluation are provided to members as part of their Evaluation #1 materials and serve as another data point for member evaluations. Last year, at the direction of the commission, staff placed proposals into the following four categories based on staff evaluations:

- 4 = **Strongly Meets Criteria** (Strongest): Proposal rates strongly across most criteria and exceeds expectations in key areas.
- 3 = **Consistently Meets Criteria** (Above Average): Proposal rates satisfactorily across most criteria and exceeds expectations for some criteria.
- 2 = **Adequately Meets Criteria** (Average): Proposal rates adequately across most criteria, meeting the minimum acceptable standards, but may be weaker for some criteria.

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1 = **Insufficiently Meets Criteria** (Below Average): Proposal rates lower across most criteria or does not sufficiently address key criteria, showing clear gaps or deficiencies.

Staff request confirmation from members that it would like staff to continue to use this method to present the results of staff evaluations.

Sample motion: Member _____ moves to adopt the presentation of staff scores as described in the staff memo.

Action #2: Evaluation #1 and Selecting Proposals for Presentation (First Cut)

The commission needs to confirm – or specify any modifications to – the following approach for Evaluation #1 and selection of proposals for presentation.

1. Members receive proposals along with staff scores and comments related to the proposals' fit with RFP priorities, law, policy, and the LCCMR-adopted evaluation criteria.
2. Members individually evaluate and select the top 40% of proposals to move forward to presentation (Evaluation #1).
3. Staff aggregate members' selections and sort proposals in high to low order by number of members selecting.

Alternative: Staff aggregate members' selections and sort proposals in high to low order by the proportion of members selecting.

The default ranking process only accounts for the members selecting a proposal, not the total members that were eligible to select a proposal. Some members have expressed concerns that this method puts proposals where members have a conflict at an unfair disadvantage because it treats a non-selection when a member has a conflict of interest the same as a non-selection when a member doesn't support a proposal. The alternative would be to rank proposals by the proportion of members selecting, which would account for the total members that were eligible to select a proposal.

The following table provides a simplified scenario assuming 5 proposals and a 5-member commission to illustrate the difference between the two methods:

	Number of Members Selecting	Proportion of Members Selecting	Rank Based on Members Selecting	Rank Based on Proportion of Members Selecting
Proposal #1	5 of 5 (no COI)	100%	1	1
Proposal #2	4 of 4 (1 COI)	100%	2	1
Proposal #3	4 of 5 (no COI)	80%	2	2
Proposal #4	3 of 4 (1 COI)	75%	3	3
Proposal #5	3 of 5 (no COI)	60%	3	4

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If members select the alternative ranking approach, all subsequent steps in the evaluation and recommendation process will be modified to be consistent with this approach.

4. The initial selection of proposals invited for presentation and additional consideration for funding will be created by going down the list of compiled Evaluation #1 results, ranked high to low, and selecting the top 91 proposals. If the cut-off falls in the middle of a group of proposals selected by the same number of members, the cut-off is moved up or down to either fully include or fully exclude the group, whichever results in a number closer to 91.

Alternative: The initial selection of proposals invited for presentation and additional consideration for funding will be created by going down the list of compiled Evaluation #1 results, ranked high to low, until the total amount requested is 125% of the amount of funds available. If the cut-off falls in the middle of a group of proposals selected by the same number of members, the cut-off is moved up or down to either fully include or fully exclude the group, whichever results in a number closer to 125% of the amount of funds available.

Basing the initial selection on a percentage of the funding available may simplify the commission's decision on which proposals to move forward to presentation and ensure that the process remains competitive through Evaluation #2.

In past RFP cycles, members predetermined the number of proposals that would be invited for presentation, which is the default process currently presented. In the 2025 RFP cycle, this process led to members needing to determine a process at the selection meeting on how to add more than 30 additional proposals to the presentation list. In the 2023 and 2024 RFP cycles, the total amount requested by the proposals selected to move forward for presentation closely matched the total amount available for recommendation. This meant that nearly all those proposals that advanced after the first evaluation were recommended for funding.

5. The House, Senate, and Citizen member groups each select up to three (3) additional proposals for presentation, resulting in possibly nine (9) more proposals being added to presentations.

Sample motion: Member _____ moves to adopt the Evaluation #1 and presentation selection process [using the alternative approach for step 3] [and step 4] as described in the staff memo.

Action #3: Presentations Format and Timing

The commission needs to confirm – or specify any modifications to – the following plan for presentations.

Presentations will be held via Zoom for presenters to save time, provide flexibility, and make participation easier for proposers. Members would have the option to attend in person or remotely; however, the chair would be in-person. Six members (including the chair) would need to attend in person for the meeting to be hybrid.

To avoid technical issues and reduce transition times, no PowerPoints will be used. For large projects (more than \$300,000 requested), presentations will be 15 minutes each: 5 minutes for presentation and 10 minutes for questions and answers. For small projects (\$300,000 or less requested), presentations will be 10 minutes each: 5 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for questions and answers. In both cases, the commission may go over this time allotment, if needed, at the discretion of the chair. Presentations will be scheduled from approximately 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, although longer days as late as 8:00 pm may be scheduled to accommodate all presentations within the number of days available.

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30-minute lunch and dinner breaks (as needed) will be provided. The standard schedule (8:30 am to 5:00 pm) would allow for approximately 32-48 presentations per day.

The exact timing and schedule of presentations will be determined once the commission determines the number of presentation days and how many presentations will take place. Last year, four presentation days were used.

Alternative: All presentations will be 10 minutes each: 5 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for questions and answers, with the discretion of the chair to go over this time allotment as needed.

Sample motion: Member _____ moves to adopt the presentation format and timing [using the alternative presentation time] as described in the staff memo.

Action #4: Evaluation #2 and Compiled Results

The commission needs to confirm – or specify any modifications to – the following process and conditions for conducting Evaluation #2 and compiling those results.

For Evaluation #2, each member allocates the available ENRTF dollars to their proposals of choice, using the LCCMR-adopted evaluation criteria. Allocating funds to a proposal indicates that the member supports funding for that proposal and the funding level they believe is appropriate for that proposal. When a member has allocated all the funds available, their evaluation is complete. The following conditions apply to Evaluation #2:

1. No more than the requested amount may be allocated to a proposal.
2. Only the full requested amount may be allocated to a proposal in Category G (Small Projects; proposals for \$300,000 or less).
3. Allocations for all other proposals may not be less than \$300,000. That is, no proposal requesting more than \$300,000 may be allocated less than \$300,000.
4. There will be a \$50,000 buffer for mistakes made during the allocation process. If the buffer is not needed in the end, the commission may either allocate it to another proposal, allocate it to the Emerging Issues Account, or recommend that it carry forward to the next RFP cycle.
5. Allocations will be rounded to the nearest \$1,000.
6. Members may allocate available ENRTF dollars to the Emerging Issues Account or to Legislative Direction (i.e., ENRTF dollars for the Legislature to solely determine how to appropriate).
7. Members may also leave funds unallocated. It would be understood that any unallocated funds would be considered a recommendation to carry them forward to the next RFP cycle.
8. The LCCMR administrative budget (if applicable), LCC Legacy Website, and DNR Contract will be included in the recommendations at the requested amount.

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Staff compile members' Evaluation #2 results into a report to be used for allocation decisions. The compiled results show the number of members allocating funds to a proposal and the average amount allocated *by those allocating funds to that proposal* (note: blanks/non-allocations will not be included in the allocation average calculation). In other words, if a proposal receives a funding allocation from a member, it is considered support for funding by that member. The proposals will be ranked high to low according to the number of members supporting funding.

Sample motion: Member _____ moves to adopt the Evaluation #2 and results compilation process [using the alternative ranking approach] as described in the staff memo.

Action #5: Initial Agreement on Recommendations

The commission needs to confirm – or specify any modifications to – the following process and conditions for using the results of Evaluation #2 to develop an initial agreement on recommendations.

An initial agreement on a recommendation package will be created by going down the list of compiled Evaluation #2 results, ranked high to low, until the total amount available for appropriation is “spent” based on the average allocation amounts. In the event of funds running out in the middle of a proposal or in the middle of a group of proposals supported by an equal number of members, the cut-off will be handled the same way as at the “selections” step associated with Evaluation #1, where the tied proposals will all be included or all be excluded, whichever results in an initial agreement closest to the total amount available. This may result in an over- or under-allocation.

In the event of an over- or under-allocation resulting from the initial agreement, staff will provide some options for member consideration at the allocations meeting once the results of the initial agreement are available.

Sample motion: Member _____ moves to adopt the process for achieving an initial agreement on recommendations [using the alternative ranking approach] as described in the staff memo.

Single Action Option

Sample motion: Member _____ moves to adopt the proposal evaluation and recommendation process [using the alternative ranking approach] [and the alternative initial selection process for presentations] [and the alternative presentation time] as described in the staff memo.