
SB 202: Task Force on Independent Scientific Review for Natural Resources

Overview and Purpose

The Oregon legislature found in Senate Bill 202 that policy and program decisions made by natural resources agencies, boards and commissions can benefit from independent scientific review that: (a) reflects a balance of representation from various research sectors, academic and nonacademic, public and private; (b) is performed by distinguished scientists from a range of disciplines; and (c) is clearly communicated to the public and state and local officials.

Senate Bill 202 establishes the Task Force on Independent Scientific Review for Natural Resources to “evaluate and assess the need for independent scientific reviews in Oregon and make appropriate recommendations” to the Governor and appropriate Legislative committees no later than September 15, 2016.

Task Force

Members of the task force shall be appointed by the Governor in consultation with the Vice Presidents of Research, or their designees, at Oregon State University, the University of Oregon, and Portland State University.

Task force members shall include members from the forestry, agriculture, manufacturing, conservation, academic and research sectors, and representatives of the three universities. At least one member shall have previously served on the Independent Multidisciplinary Science, Team, or on another state or federal scientific review body such as the National Academy of Sciences. The task force shall have its first meeting on or before January 1, 2016.

Task Force Staffing

Senate Bill 202 directed the Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University to provide staff support to the task force.

Phases and Goals

The task force’s work is conducted in two consecutive phases. *Phase I* (goal 1) and *Phase II* (goals 2-4). The scope of *Phase II* depends on the results of the first phase.

Phase I

Goal 1: Assess the need (and capacity) for independent scientific review for natural resources in Oregon.

Phase II

Goal 2: If the task force determines that there is a need for independent scientific review in Oregon, it shall make recommendations on one or more entities that are best situated to conduct or coordinate independent scientific review.

Goal 3: Make recommendations on whether the entity or entities identified would need legislative authority to act as independent scientific review bodies for Oregon.

Goal 4: Make recommendations regarding the structure, function and processes of the scientific review entity or entities and the process for conducting reviews. Senate Bill 202 requires the task force to consider a number of questions in forming its recommendations.

Contact Information

Governor’s Office

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Institute for Natural Resources

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Milestones

Spring 2016

Phase I: Evaluate and determine:

- if natural resources agencies, legislators and the public would benefit from independent scientific review
- if existing resources for conducting reviews are meeting the needs of natural resource agencies and other policymakers
- the mechanisms and structures being used in other states and at the federal level for independent science reviews in natural resources

If yes, then move to the next phase milestones.

Summer 2016

Phase II: Recommend:

- the entity or entities best situated to coordinate or conduct independent science reviews
 - the need for legislative authority
 - the structure and function of the review process
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15 September 2016

At the latest, final report delivered to the Legislature.

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Task Force Members

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Freshwater Scientist
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Timeline (Draft)

Item	Timeline
Task Force	
Task force meetings (locations TBD)	Jan, Mar, May, and Jul
Phase 1	
Goal 1: Assess need and capacity for independent scientific review in Oregon.	January - June 2016
Objective 1.1: Evaluate whether natural resource agencies, legislators, and public would benefit from independent scientific reviews.	Jan – May/Jun
Objective 1.2: Evaluate whether existing state, federal, and academic resources for conducting reviews are meeting agency & policy maker needs.	Jan – Apr
Objective 1.3: Evaluate mechanisms and structures that are in place in other states and at federal level for natural resource policy science reviews.	Jan – Mar
If it is recommended to move forward, move on to Phase II (Goals 2-4); if not, write required legislative report.	
Phase 2	
Goal 2: Make recommendations on entity(ies) best situated to conduct or coordinate independent scientific review.	May – June 2016
Objective 2.1: Identify and review/assess the candidate existing scientific entities.	May - Jun
Objective 2.2: Make any recommendations regarding necessary changes to the entity, if a particular existing scientific entity is recommended.	May - Jun
Objective 2.3: Make recommendations regarding how to structure a new independent scientific entity, if developing a new independent scientific review entity is suggested.	Jun
Goal 3: Make recommendations on whether the entities identified would need legislative authority to act as independent scientific review bodies for Oregon.	June-July 2016
Goal 4: Make recommendations regarding the structure and function of the process to be used by the recommended entities in the course of independent scientific reviews.	June-July 2016
Submit report to the Legislature	on or before 15 September 2016

Detailed Goals, Outcomes and Deliverables (Draft)

Goals

Goal 1: Assess the need (and capacity) for independent scientific review in Oregon.

- **Objective 1.1:** Evaluate whether natural resources agencies, legislators and the public would benefit from the incorporation of independent scientific review in the making of policy decisions.
- **Objective 1.2:** Evaluate whether existing state, federal and academic resources for conducting independent scientific review are meeting the needs of natural resources agencies and other policymakers.
- **Objective 1.3:** Evaluate the mechanisms and structures that are in place in other states and at the federal level for independent scientific review related to natural resources policy.

Goal 2: Make recommendations on one or more entities that are best situated to conduct or coordinate independent scientific reviews, if the task force determines that there is a need for independent science review in the state.

- **Objective 2.1:** Identify and review/assess the candidate existing scientific entities.
- **Objective 2.2:** Make any recommendations regarding necessary changes to the entity, if a particular existing scientific entity is recommended.
- **Objective 2.3:** If developing a new independent scientific review entity is suggested, the task force shall make recommendations regarding how to structure this new independent scientific entity.

Tasks

- **Task 2.1.** Consider whether the entity should provide reports to the Legislative Assembly or otherwise be subject to special legislative oversight.
- **Task 2.2.** Consider whether organizational safeguards must be established or changed within the entity to ensure that the entity is free from bias and that a wide variety of natural resource disciplines and interests are represented.
- **Task 2.3.** Consider how to develop or change the structure or processes of the entity's advisory board or other governing body in order to support the independence of scientific review panels convened by the entity, which shall include consideration of the entity's advisory board or other governing body directing or participating in the scientific analysis and review conducted or coordinated by the entity.
- **Task 2.4.** Consider how the entity's funding structure should be created, altered or supplemented to ensure that there is no perception of bias in the funding of independent scientific reviews and to ensure that adequate funds are available to conduct robust reviews.
- **Task 2.5.** Consider how to develop processes for conducting or coordinating independent scientific review in order to encourage balanced, broad and diverse participation among the scientific disciplines that may be called upon in the course of independent scientific review.

- Task 2.6. Consider how to develop procedures for the selection and deliberation of scientific experts to participate in independent scientific reviews, taking into consideration lessons learned from the processes used by the former Independent Multidisciplinary Science Team and other processes for independent scientific reviews.

Goal 3: Make recommendations on whether the entities identified would need legislative authority to act as independent scientific review bodies for Oregon.

Goal 4: Make recommendations regarding the structure and function of the process to be used by the recommended entities in the course of independent scientific reviews.

Tasks

- Task 4.1. Consider whether the entity should respond to inquiries from the Governor's office or the Legislative Assembly, the citizen boards of natural resources agencies or from other appropriate parties.
- Task 4.2. Consider whether the entity should independently select science issues to review.
- Task 4.3. Consider whether a state agency should be required to respond in writing to a report issued by an independent scientific review panel, explaining how the agency intends to implement the panel's suggestions or why the agency does not plan to implement the suggestions.
- Task 4.4. Consider how to enhance involvement of the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Portland State University and other universities in the independent scientific review process.
- Task 4.5. Consider how to provide a scientific review process that is open to the public and that inspires public confidence in, and understanding of, the review process without compromising the independence of the review.

Anticipated Outcomes

- A determination if there is a need for independent science reviews in the state of Oregon.
- Recommendations of an entity or entities best situated to coordinate or conduct independent science reviews.
- Recommendations on whether the entities identified would need legislative authority to act as independent scientific review bodies for Oregon.
- Recommendations regarding the structure and function of the process to be used by the recommended entities in the course of independent scientific reviews.

Anticipated Deliverables

Intermediate Products

- Summary notes of all task force meetings.
- Summary report and PowerPoint presentation on whether natural resources agencies, legislators and the public would benefit from the incorporation of independent scientific review in the making of policy decisions.

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- Summary report and PowerPoint presentation on whether existing state, federal and academic resources for conducting independent scientific review are meeting the needs of natural resources agencies and other policymakers.
- Summary report and PowerPoint presentation on the mechanisms and structures that are in place in other states and at the federal level for independent scientific review related to natural resources policy.
- Summary assessment report and/or comparative chart of the characteristics of the candidate entities.
- Documented changes needed by the entity/entities, if recommended to coordinate or conduct the independent scientific reviews.
- Summary report and PowerPoint presentation of the recommendations regarding the structure and function of the process to be used by the recommended entities in the course of independent scientific reviews.

Final Product

- Final report for the Legislature due on or before 15 September 2016.

Roles and Expectations (Draft)

Expectations

- Prepare for and attend all scheduled meetings.
- Be timely with and responsive to task force communications.
- Be actively engaged in ensuring the fairness and transparency of the process.
- Actively participate in productive exchanges.
- Work collegially to produce quality deliverables.
- Openly acknowledge any potential conflict of interest.

Roles

Task Force Members

- Submit a report of findings and recommendations to the Governor and appropriate committee of the Legislative Assembly no later than September 16, 2016.
- The task force shall elect one of the voting members to serve as chair.
- The task force may adopt rules necessary for the operation of the task force.
- The task force shall meet at times and places specified by a majority of the voting members of the task force. The first meeting shall occur on or before January 1, 2016.
- A majority of the voting members of the task force constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business. Official action by the task force requires the approval of a majority of the voting members of the task force.

Task Force Chair

- Serve as the primary liaison for the task force with the Governor's Office, INR, and the facilitator
- Work with the facilitator, Governor's Office and INR Director to design task force meetings.
- Take the lead in resolving disagreements and seeking consensus among task force members on substantive issues.
- Take the lead in enforcing timelines for task force deliverables.
- Take the lead in reporting to the Governor and/or Legislative Assembly, as necessary.
- Serve as the point of contact, with the INR Director, regarding stakeholder interactions and communications.

State Agency Representatives (Nonvoting)

- Attend task force meetings.
- Participate in task force discussions.
- Respond to task force requests for information.

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Governor's Office

- Appointment of task force members, including any vacancies.
- Attend task force meetings.
- As needed, work with the chair, task force members and INR Director and staff.

Institute for Natural Resources Director

- Attend task force meetings.
- Oversee task force process, communications, and development of products.
- Hire and work with task force facilitator.
- Provide guidance to task force staff in their logistical, research, and product delivery tasks.
- Work with the chair, task force members and Governor's Office to help resolve any issues that may arise in the implementation of the project.
- Serve as the point of contact, with the task force chair, regarding stakeholder interactions and communications.

Institute for Natural Resources Task Force Staff

- Support for task force (scheduling meetings, meeting notes, other).
- Support task force communications including website, meeting notices, announcements, etc.
- Conduct research, information gathering, and documentation of task force findings.
- Work with task force members and Chair to help produce intermediate and final products including writing and editing the final report to the Legislature.

Facilitator

- Work with the task force chair, Governor's Office and INR Director to design task force meetings.
- Design processes that will achieve the group's goals and provide fairness and transparency for the process.
- Use group facilitation competencies to add value to the task force's work – use time and space intentionally, evoke participation and creativity.
- Facilitate all task force meetings.
- Responsible for the stewardship of the process and impartial toward the content.
- Report directly to the INR Director.
- Maintain confidentiality of information.