

EMC Final Minutes
Oct. 9, 4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

Attendance

Member		SeatP	Member		Seat
Dan Antonioli	P	At-Large	Susan Riley	P	At-Large
Steve Bissen	P	Town of Dryden	Barry Siebe	E	Town of Groton
Christine Collins	P	Town of Ulysses	Elaine Tietjen	P	At-Large
Cait Darfler	P	At-Large	Brad Will	E	At-Large
Edward Dubovi	P	Town of Lansing	Jack Zinda	E	At-Large
Ace Dufresne	P	Student 1	<i>Kathleen Yen</i>	P	<i>Associate</i>
Thomas Hirasuna	P	At-Large	<i>Brian Wendel</i>	A	<i>Associate</i>
Siobhan Hull	P	City of Ithaca	<i>Anne Koreman</i>	P	<i>Legislative Liaison</i>
Peter McDonald	E	Town of Danby	Darby Kiley	P	Tompkins Co. staff
Melissa Millspaugh	E	Town of Enfield	Kristin McCarthy	P	Tompkins Co. staff
Steve Nicholson	P	Town of Caroline			

Guests: Lori Brewer, Cynthia Brock, Len Luka

Call to Order – Chair Cait Darfler called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

Agenda Review/Public Comment – No changes to the agenda. Len Luka from Binghamton introduced himself, explaining he works with Climate Reality and New Yorkers for Clean Power.

Approval of Minutes – The September draft minutes were not approved due to lack of quorum at the beginning of the meeting. [Group forgot to approve minutes later, so they will be voted on next month.]

Report/Discussion: Proposed moratorium on biosolids spreading in Tompkins County

Cait gave an overview and extensive report on the proposed moratorium on biosolid spreading. She explained that information received early in the week shifted the approach away from a county-level moratorium, as Tompkins County lacks the legal mechanism for such action. The permitting process comes from NYSDEC, and the County is not involved. Instead, the County can pass a resolution urging state action and explore redesignating biosolids as waste requiring tracking through the existing hauler permit process. Discussion touched on previous legislative efforts with Assemblymember Anna Kelles, where Cait noted that legislation passed the Senate but not the Assembly due to lobbying arguments about business impacts. Cait provided historical context: 1980s treatment processes created Class A biosolids considered safe, but recent understanding shows these processes break long-chain PFAS into smaller, more mobile chains. The EPA only released its draft risk assessment in January 2025, with governmental systems lagging behind scientific understanding. Cait noted that each municipality calling for state action would be valuable. Tompkins County Council of Governments unanimously passed a moratorium resolution, and the EMC could support municipalities through Conservation Advisory Councils with model language. Kathleen Yen noted that letters of support carry the least legal liability, while moratoriums and local laws create greater litigation risk due to state pre-emption. Cynthia Brock, chair of the Water Resources Council, clarified that under DEC guidelines, anything non-residential is

classified as industrial waste, and all treatment plants in Tompkins County send biosolids to landfills. The resolution urges the state legislature to pass comprehensive PFAS legislation, urges DEC to establish testing protocols, recommends the County redefine biosolids as solid waste, and directs the County Clerk to forward copies to relevant officials. Group agreed to editorial changes in the resolution, allowing Cait and her colleagues working on it after the meeting to continue adjusting text as needed. Cait will present it at PEEQ the following week as an information item, with formal consideration at that committee's November meeting.

Action: Resolution on Biosolids Moratorium

Action: Steve Nicholson made a motion, which Susan Riley seconded, to approve EMC Resolution 2025-02 Supporting New York State Bill S5759C and A6192D, Urging a Case for Caution with Regard to the Land Application of Biosolids. Motion carried.

Executive Committee Report – Cait reported that Ingrid Zabel has stepped down from the EMC for personal reasons and thanked her for years of service. Rather than filling Ingrid's executive committee position immediately, the group will establish a nominating committee in November to fill all four executive positions, with voting in December.

Strategic Planning Groups Update – Discussion centered on several key initiatives, including creating an EMC expertise directory and collaborating with other organizations on a symposium, with members leveraging existing relationships to establish connections. The conversation addressed the need for standardized approaches when reaching out to other organizations, with Cait suggesting specific language and workflows for members to follow. Ace shared a membership survey form gathering information about member interests, time commitment, connections, expertise, and feedback. The survey requires review before distribution and should include clear time commitment expectations. Cait committed to working with the executive committee to develop a skills list for the survey and propose a committee structure for the November meeting.

Town of Lansing Moratorium and Hemlock Management Plan

Group discussed the proposed AI data center in Lansing, where TeraWolf plans to develop a computing facility at a former coal plant site. Members also talked about hemlock woolly adelgid management and strategies for protecting county hemlock stands from this invasive pest.

Legislative Liaison Update (*as needed*) – None

Staff Report (*as needed*) – None

Member Announcements – None

Adjournment – Chair Cait Darfler adjourned the meeting at 5:37pm.